

**THE IMPACT OF EMOTIONS ON
CONSUMER DECISION-MAKING: A
CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR ANALYSIS OF
HEDONIC CONSUMPTION AS RELATED
TO THE HARLEY-DAVIDSON BRAND**

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Dedicated to my family for always supporting me

A.S.N.F

Abstract

Consumer behaviour has varied aspects that allow for a more detailed understanding of why certain products are purchased. In this light the American firm of Harley-Davidson is utilised as an appropriate case study with a focus on men aged 40 to 60 from the area of Edinburgh. Harley-Davidson appears to be an under-studied phenomenon. Whilst some examples are present in which Harley-Davidson has an important role, these examples either focus on marketing from the perspective of the company or from the social environment the consumer enters after the purchase has been completed. This research considers factors that motivated consumers carry out the act of purchasing a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

A thorough literature review of current research establishes an academic understanding of the environment that consumers may enter and attempts to identify possible motivations for the consumer to act in this way. Various important motivating factors are established by the literature which contribute to the hedonic purchase intentions of middle-aged male consumers who may go through a midlife-crisis situation in which they attempt to distract from their aging character and counter it through a more lavish lifestyle. Other aspects considered are the manner in which money is handled under various circumstances.

The primary research was conducted as a qualitative case study. This involved semi-structured interviews with volunteering participants at the local Harley-Davidson dealership in Edinburgh. In order to illustrate other ways in which money is spent and risks perceived, the research uses an additional cluster of non-motorcyclists from the same area, gender, and age group. Through the openness of the participants, aspects that had not previously been considered, such as participants' description of depression and the positive impact of reduction of alcohol consumption.

It has been established through the thematic data analysis that Harley-Davidson consumers do not struggle with a mid-life crisis but rather follow a progression under which a Harley-Davidson is the most comfortable option for them before retiring from motorcycling. Based on the thematic analysis it was discovered that the majority of Harley-Davidson owners have previously owned other brands and moved to Harley within the age limits set for this research.

Keywords: Consumer behaviour, Hedonic Consumption, Harley-Davidson, Edinburgh, Progression of Consumption

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Without all of the support I have received, this task would have been more challenging and would not have had the ending that it has today.

Abbreviations and explanation of Terminology used

HD: Harley-Davidson

HOG: Harley owner group

HDC: Harley-Davidson cluster

NMC: Non-motorcyclist cluster

R1: Race bikes

1%ers: Outlaw motorcycle groups. Study identified only 1% of motorcyclists are part of such outlaw groups, these groups take pride in belonging to this 1% and indicate that with a badge on their vest.

Outsiders: Anybody who is not part of the motorcycle environment as a non-motorcyclist

Definitions of key concepts

The following definitions are operational definitions and are used during this research.

Consumer behaviour¹: Consumer behaviour is defined by Perner (2018) as “The study of individuals, groups, or organisations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society.” (Perner, 2018). Solomon et al. (2006) outlined it as the process of decision making and the physical activity involved in acquiring, evaluating, using, and disposing of goods and services to satisfy needs and wants. Consumer behaviour combines a variety of aspects and outlines specific elements of psychology and sociology in regard to emotions, reasoning and the environment the consumer finds him or herself in. This combination of specific elements working together can explain purchase intentions. Consumer behaviour combines psychology and sociology whilst also adding to the level of information processing which may influence specific purchase intentions.

Hedonic Consumption²: As stated by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982, p92) Hedonic consumption designates those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one’s experience with products. A prototypically utilitarian product may possess hedonic characteristics, as when detergent is marketed based on its scent rather than its cleaning ability (Chaker, 2011; Alba & Williams, 2013, p2); a prototypically hedonic product such as chocolate could be consumed for its cardiovascular benefits; and a product initially consumed to achieve euphoria may subsequently be consumed to reduce the unpleasant cravings caused by addiction (Linden, 2011; Alba & Williams, 2013, p2). For hedonic products it is more about the consumer’s satisfaction rather than its functionality.

Experiential Consumption³: Experiential consumption is related to many aspects of consumer behaviour, the first one is based on the nature of the product. Often experiential consumption is linked to services rather than material items and therefore is more about creating a pleasure of experience to meet or exceed expectations.

¹ For further details see chapter 2.1.1.

² For further details see chapters 1.1 & 2.1.2

³ For further details see chapters 1.1 & 2.1.3

Examples of experiential consumption can be found in a variety of services, such as holidays, theatre or restaurant visits but can also be identified in other areas of the entertainment industry such as music. Experiences are intangible and exist only in the consumer's mind (Nicola et al., 2009; Alba & Williams, 2013)

Material consumption⁴: Material consumption is linked to an object of consumption rather than a service as with experiential consumption. Experiential aspects can be present within the material object, for example a convertible vehicle offers both aspects as a material consumption object and simultaneously offering an experiential consumption. "Material possession is static, and pleasure derived from it is subject to relatively rapid adaptation" (Alba & Williams, 2013, p5).

Middle-age⁵: A general definition of middle aged is "from about 45 to 65" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018). Psychologist Erik Erikson (1950) introduced the eight stages of psychological development and set the age limits for middle aged, or as he described it as Middle Adulthood to 40-65 years. Due to the fact that it is an imprecise concept and no consensus was reached in regard to a precise definition of middle-age, it is decided to set the age as 40 to 60, keeping the age gap similar but adjusting it more accurately to Harley-Davidson's mean consumer age to provide a more suitable representation.

Mid-life crisis⁶: Elliott Jaques coined the term mid-life crisis in 1965 in which he stated,

The paradox is that of entering the prime of life, the stage of fulfilment, but at the same time the prime and fulfilment are dated. Death lies beyond. [...] It is this fact of the entry upon the psychological scene of the reality and inevitability of one's own eventual personal death that is the central and crucial feature of

⁴ For further details see chapters 1.1, 1.5, & 2.1.3

⁵ For further details see chapter 1.1

⁶ For further details see chapter 1.1

the mid-life phase — the feature which precipitates the critical nature of the period. (Jaques, 1965, p506; Setiya, 2014)

The fear of getting older and ultimately death can often cause a response in which the consumer attempts to counter those fears by acting in a manner that results in a younger appearance on the outside and an avoidance of the fear of getting older internally.

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Chapter One – Introduction

Chapter One- Introduction

This chapter will introduce the Ph.D. Thesis focusing on the consumer behaviour of middle-aged male Harley-Davidson consumers and their motivation for the consumption of Harley-Davidson products. Consumer behaviour considers a variety of aspects which include psychological, social and personal aspects. Additionally, it does not just focus on the purchasing in and of itself but often considers satisfaction after the purchase has been completed and the actual retrospective enjoyment of the consumption (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; Seligman, 2011).

Furthermore, a division needs to be made between the different types of consumption, utilitarian and hedonic consumption. Utilitarian consumption focuses on necessities that are required for a standard of living to be present, which can include, but may not be limited to, required purchases in relation to housing, food, or medication. Hedonic consumption outlines purchases that go beyond basic requirements and are connected to products that may not be necessarily be needed but desired, this can include but may not be limited to sports cars, villas, holidays, or jewellery. "Hedonic consumption designates those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p92). Consumption can often be highly motivated by the meaning of the product as for the consumer himself and for others, as consumers do not solely buy products based on their functionality but also considers what they mean (Levy, 1959; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). This research will focus on hedonic products under consumer behaviour.

Hedonic consumption can be divided into two further subsections, experiential and material, in relation to the product itself and how it is used. Experiential consumption is indicated through purchases that are connected to non-tangible assets such as restaurant visits (Tully et al., 2015), holidays, cinema visits or other entertainment industries that provide an experience for the consumer rather than a material possession, as outlined by Havlena and Holbrook (1986). Material objects are represented through tangible assets that are in the possession of the consumer but possess a hedonic background. This can be jewellery, sports cars, or as it is in this case a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. However, often material goods under hedonic consumption represent an experience to the consumer that add to the long-lasting enjoyment. The following diagram outlines the process of consumer behaviour for this particular research at hand.

The research in itself focuses on middle aged men aged 40-60. Whilst a general definition of middle aged is “from about 45 to 65” (Oxford Dictionaries, 2018). As it is an imprecise concept, it was decided to set middle age at 40 to 60 years of age, keep the age gap the same but adjusting it more accurately to Harley-Davidson’s mean consumer age.

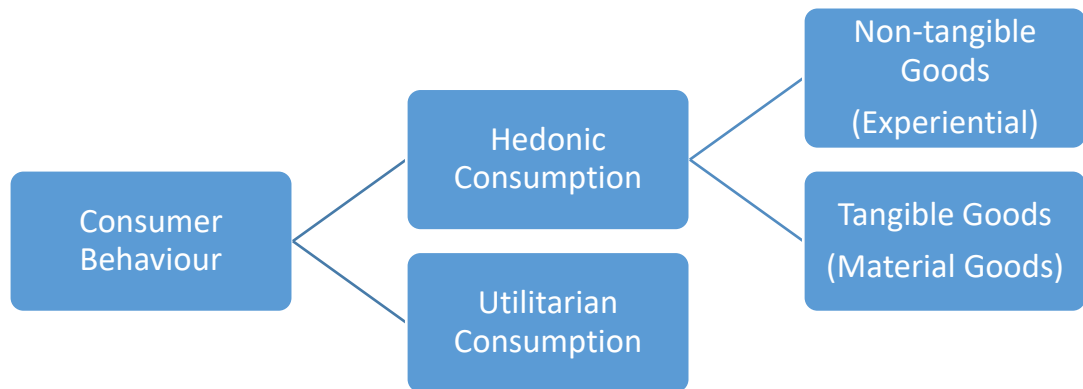


Figure 1.1: Consumer Behaviour

Whilst it is easy to follow the common notions of Harley-Davidson products being part of a mid-life crisis it will be important to hear the consumer perspective that may or may not support this notion. The term mid-life crisis was coined by Elliott Jaques in 1965 and is based on coming “face-to-face with our limitations, our restrictions, and our mortality” (Strenger & Ruttenberg, 2008). However, this period also represents a time of change in which the person re-examines even his most basic assumptions (Strenger & Ruttenberg, 2008).

Harley-Davidson can offer not just a suitable case study for marketing purposes but can also offer important insights into consumer behaviour. Through face-to-face interviews under the interpretivist approach, the researcher can thematically analyse the interviews to gather an understanding of the decision-making processes which supported the consumption.

1.1 Research Aim

The aim of the research is to explore the consumer behaviour of middle-aged Harley-Davidson consumers based in Edinburgh through which a higher level of understanding of consumption processes may be achieved.

1.2 Objectives

The following objectives for the research will support the research aim:

1. To understand the consumer behaviour of Harley-Davidson consumers aged 40 to 60 years in Scotland.
2. To develop a comprehensive literature review of consumer behaviour and its application and implication for Harley-Davidson consumers.
3. To identify motivational factors that have supported the decision-making process for Harley consumers to indulge in the hedonic consumption of the subcultural environment of Harley-Davidson.
4. To enhance the understanding of consumer behaviour.

1.3 Research questions

The research questions are formulated as followed:

1. What are the psychosocial and behavioural factors that elicit hedonic consumption amongst British males between the ages of 40 and 60?
2. How do these factors impact their attitudes towards their personal and household financial risk?
3. What is the process by which each of the key economic, psycho-social, and developmental factors influence the decision?
4. How can this be modelled to explain hedonic consumption within a framework that considers the economic risks involved?

1.4 Rationale

After the successful completion of undergraduate and graduate studies the researcher decided to examine Harley-Davidson as an example of hedonic consumption. This was initially due to a long standing personal interest in Harley-Davidson motorcycles including personal consumption and use of Harley-Davidson

This personal fascination for the brand allowed the researcher to remain motivated throughout the process of the research. It further allowed him to obtain very detailed data on the basis of his knowledge, as the researcher is able to ask detailed questions to allow the research to benefit from the gathered information.

The theoretical framework will be based on consumer behaviour in regard to hedonic consumption. The concept of consumer behaviour adds a new understanding of consumption within economic theory by adding the layers emotions and other human factors, such as social relationships and values (Simon, 1997), onto the process of decision-making (Bray, 2008). Consumer behaviour can be defined as “the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires” (Solomon et al., 2006, p6; Bray, 2008), “needs and desires to be satisfied range from hunger and thirst to love, status or even spiritual fulfilment” (Solomon et al., 2006, p6). Two different approaches can be taken to examine consumer behaviour, demographic and psychographic (Solomon et al., 2006). As the proposed research utilises specific gender and age selection it will be influenced by those specific demographics. Thus, the proposed research will be approached from a demographic point of view, based on this particular group being key purchasers of this particular product. Perception of the field of consumer behaviour is influenced by a variety of factors within the macro and micro levels, social focus and individual focus respectively (Solomon et al., 2006). Both will influence the consumer’s decision, and subsequently also the consumer’s reaction which will in turn impact future decision-making processes (see image below) (Zhao et al., 2014).

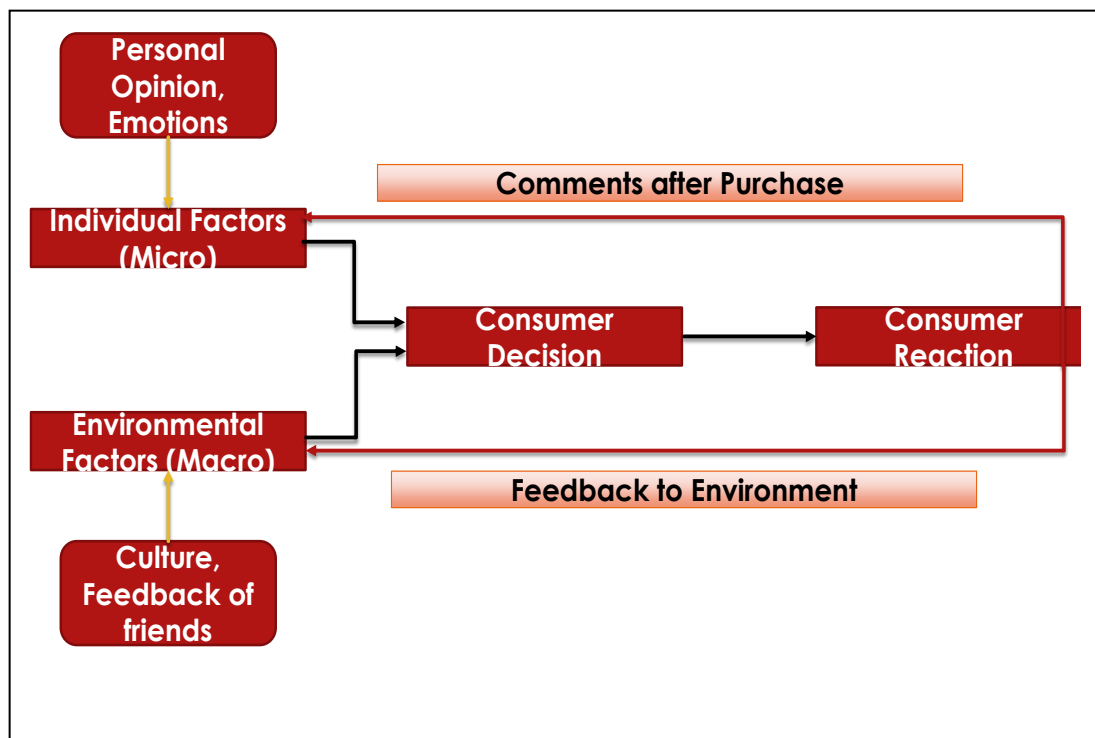


Figure 1.2: Basic Theoretical Framework adaptation of the work from Zhao et al. (2014)

The consumer perspective, rather than aspects of marketing or the point of view of the company of Harley-Davidson, will offer an insight into the decision-making processes and an understanding of emotional influences. These influences will include but are not limited to specific values of human nature (Schwartz et al., 2000; Shepherd et al., 2015), a desire to re-experience (Lacher & Mizerski, 1994; Alba & Williams, 2013), affect heuristics (Slovic et al., 2007), sense of belonging (Celsi et al., 1993; Rifkin, 1997; Csikszentmihalyi, 2008), happiness and satisfaction through brand usage (Seligman, 2011; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), satisfaction through long-term product usage (Tully et al., 2015), influences by others (Wood & Hayes, 2012), and social status (Mazzocco et al., 2012). The decision to look at the consumption through the lens of the consumer gives the research the appropriate angle of discussion for the identification of the influences that drive hedonic consumption. Thus, illustrating an understanding that the consumer himself sees or will see during the processes of their participation in the research, in which the previously mentioned factors will be given an appropriate platform of discussion. The individual factors or micro factors, as outlined in the illustration above, will have a significant focus within the research. Whilst macro factors, such as culture or feedback from friends about a specific purchase are interesting to research, it would open up a different approach to the research and would unnecessarily complicate matters further. The decision to focus on micro factors will already deliver a significant amount of research as it will be based around the emotions of decision-making in regard to hedonic consumption.

Research from the previously mentioned authors, Schwarz et al., Lacher and Mizerski, Celsi et al., Holbrook & Hirschman, Mazzocco et al., and Tully et al., contributes to the understanding of hedonic consumption through a variety of factors. Through the different focus of each contribution a picture emerges which outlines different aspects of hedonic consumption, each factor will be important for the proposed research and connect to a focus of the research.

Key factors include the aspect of affect heuristics, which outline the creation of desire through affectionate emotions towards a product and impacting the perception of risk (Slovic et al., 2007). Furthermore, macro-level factors will play a critical role within the theoretical framework as it will outline influences of the individual's decision-making processes through aspects of communities and how they can impact or motivate purchases and participation (Solomon et al., 2006; Csikszentmihalyi, 2008). In

addition to those mentioned points, facets of social status (Mazzocco et al., 2012) and how it can be expressed through material goods will obtain a more in-depth standing within the research based on the experiences of Harley-Davidson consumers. This expression of luxury consumption, of which Harley-Davidson is an example, will generate a more detailed understanding of frivolous consumer behaviour linked with previous aspects of risk. The involvement of risk can be expressed through two different approaches, the risk that comes with the concept of motorcycling itself and the financial risks that are expressed through the purchase of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

The proposed research method has been shown to be effective when used in relationship with qualitative ethnographic research (such as Celsi et al., 1993), this is based on the connection of beliefs and values within a group. The advantages of this research approach includes the possibility for participants to express themselves freely and unjudged. However, it also bears the challenge of not becoming too involved and therefore becoming biased and subjective to the research, even if in a manner that is academically acceptable. Furthermore, ethnographic research would be most effective within longitudinal research.

The proposed research will look at the hedonic consumption through an interpretivist approach which will allow detailed information gathering whilst not becoming absorbed within the culture of the research. Whilst limitations are in place, such as the motivation of the participants and the expressional abilities of the subject, it will still give a pattern of motivation which will ultimately lead to a more in-depth understanding of lived hedonic consumption.

Based on the outlined framework the variables will be defined as follows. The dependent variable is not the purchase but rather the reaction of the consumer to the purchase. Following the dependent variable the independent variables are formed and contain factors which may include a variety of emotions such as the expression of pride of being able to purchase a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, satisfaction in regards to consumption and future brand usage, an increased perception of social status which may or may not be on a personal level, and the perception of risk, both financial and personal. Furthermore, the impact of the affect heuristics will be explored. In addition to the previously mentioned points the age, gender, and the number of Harley-Davidson purchases will be another layer of independent variables. The research will focus on 40-60 year old men who are Harley-Davidson consumers.

Ultimately outlining their motivations and emotions towards the brand of Harley-Davidson by outlining their purchase intentions through becoming a member of the Harley-Davidson subculture.

Originally, the researcher intended to use behavioural economics to guide this research, a highly quantitative research approach. However, based on the high subjectivity it was decided to use a qualitative approach. Consumer behavior was an appropriate selection for this research as it allows for detailed information to be shared by the participants.

Through this research the understanding of consumer behaviour will be enhanced as it adds to the overall understanding of decision-making processes that are involved within consumption.

Consumer behaviour is the study “of individuals, groups, or organisations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society.” (Perner, 2018) Consumer behaviour allows not just for a more detailed understanding of consumption but for business organisations to utilise this knowledge to market and distribute their products and improve overall sales. Products in this case could be material objects or could also be services that consumers may require or desire. The overall understanding of consumer behaviour can influence corporate decision making in terms of marketing strategies that are used but also may impact decisions regarding product launches or discontinuations. Whilst the latter would be a hindsight decision based on sales, the previous aspects would be in anticipation and foresight on the behaviour of consumers. Consumer behaviour is often seen as a sub-category of marketing but in the researcher’s opinion it should be regarded as a self-standing discipline that takes place before marketing and should be seen as an integral part of corporate strategies.

1.5 Research process and forward plan

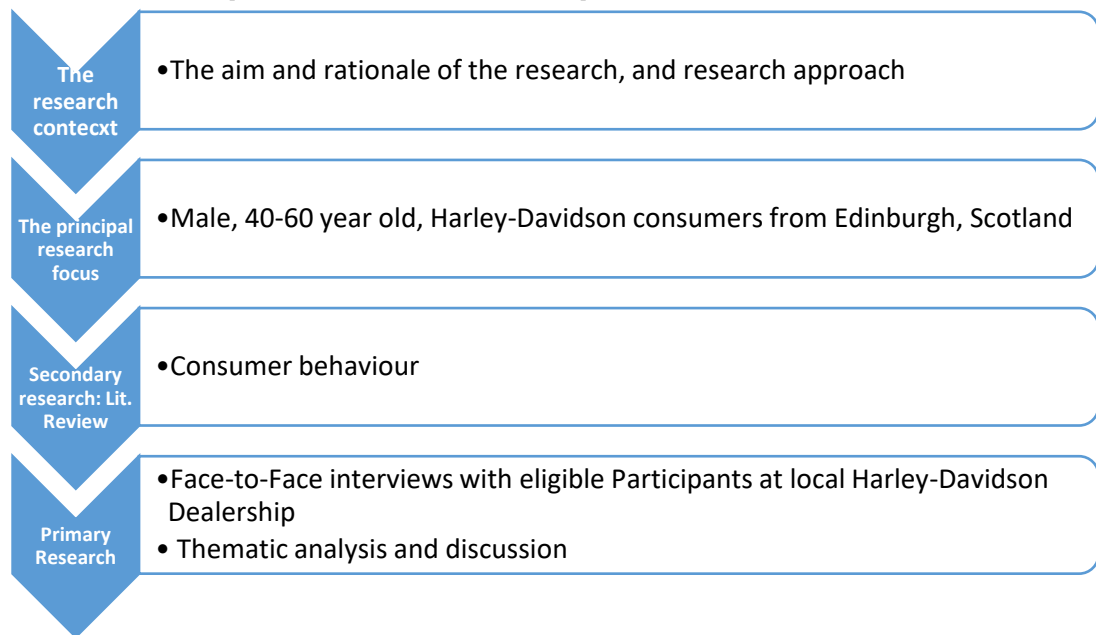


Figure 1.3: Research process and forward plan

1.6 The Case study: Harley-Davidson

This chapter provides information about the brand of Harley-Davidson, including Harley-Davidson's history, the structure of Harley-Davidson, and information about Harley-Davidson's situation in the European Market and the United Kingdom. The latter will focus on market share allocation in regard to sales and current registration figures through Information provided by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA).

1.6.1 History of Harley-Davidson

Harley-Davidson began in 1901 in Milwaukee through the work of childhood friends William Harley, as the engineer, and Arthur Davidson. After two years of work and the help of Arthur Davidson's older brother Walter Davidson the first engine powered cycle was finished. William Harley's family originated from Littleport, Cambridgeshire in England (BBC, 2003). Whereas the Davidson family's origin can be traced to Netherton in Scotland before they left to the United States in 1858 (The Scotsman, 2016)

Harley-Davidson had humble beginnings in the shed of the Davidson's backyard. Such historical details of a now internationally known company, speak to a representation of the American dream.



Image 1.1: The original Harley-Davidson Shed in which the first Harley-Davidson motorcycles were developed and built (Museum, 2019)

The family aspects was enhanced by the addition of another Davidson family member, William Davidson as production foreman of the then young motorcycle company. Harley-Davidson's popularity grew due to reliability and marketing as a utilitarian motorcycle with practical transportation purposes, "less trouble and expense than a horse, and requiring less exertion than a bicycle" (Siegal, 2014, p10). Harley-Davidson's popularity grew steadily over time.

In 1917 sanctions were introduced on the use of oil or petrol for leisure due to the entry of the United States into the First World War. However, Harley-Davidson managed to bypass these sanctions and profit by building military motorcycles for the war efforts of the United States. With over 15,000 motorcycles a year being built by Harley-Davidson in 1917 and 1918 (Zuberi, 2006; McCrystal, 2014). During the First World War the motorcycle industry thrived (McCrystal, 2014). Images such as Image 1.2 strengthened Harley-Davidson's positioning



Image 1.2: Corporal Roy Holtz as the first American to enter Germany. He is riding a Harley-Davidson. The writing says "The first Yank and Harley-Davidson to enter Germany 11/17/18" (Museum, 2019)

after the end of the First World War. During the Second World War Harley-Davidson again supplied motorcycles to the military, this time over 90,000 vehicles (Howe, 2003). On the basis of two World Wars Harley-Davidson created a loyal customer base of former soldiers who knew Harley-Davidson and admired their durability and reliability in combat. This facilitated the survival of Harley-Davidson.

The former soldiers formed motorcycle groups and events which allowed them to experience freedom on their motorcycle (Howe, 2003). The creation of the Harley-Davidson community allowed for the development of the Harley sub-culture of today.

Over time, however, Harley-Davidson lost its original position as market leader in the United States. This came through the rise of Japanese manufactured motorcycles such as Honda, Kawasaki, and Suzuki during the 1960s and 1970s. Harley-Davidson struggled to compete as its own company and eventually it was bought by AMF (American Machine and Foundry). In the twelve years of ownership by AMF, the Harley-Davidson reputation for reliability was tarnished and Harley-Davidson became known as a lower quality bike. Additionally, the motorcycles manufactured by Harley's Japanese competitors were not just cheaper but also superior both in quality and technological advances (Masker, 2009).

In 1981, 13 employees led an \$80 million buyout, including Willie G. Davidson, grandson of one Harley-Davidson's founders William Davidson (Howe, 2003). Willie G. Davidson later said that this "decision was more emotional than financial. [...] If there was a chance to save this great institution, I wanted to be a part of it."

Since the mid-1980s Harley-Davidson has turned its fate around back to its old days of reliability and well manufactured motorcycles, after the years of struggle. As Howe states, "Today, even people who find motorcycling repellent know a Harley when they see one, or rather, hear one." (Howe, 2003).

1.6.2 Harley-Davidson Structure and Revenue Streams

Harley-Davidson has three revenue streams. The first and most obvious one comes from the motorcycles sales. In 2018 this made up 78.1% of Harley's overall income (Harley-Davidson, 2018). The next largest segment is the parts & accessories sector making up 15.2% of the total. As discussed, within Harley's sub-culture there is a strong tendency towards customisations of the consumers Harley-Davidson can be observed. Whilst not all changes are made up of original Harley-Davidson parts the company still benefits from purchases. The third largest sector is the general merchandise segment which is 4.9% of Harley's revenue. This can consist of T-shirts or other wearable Harley-Davidson products including protective equipment. It can also be extended to other areas such as homeware such as glasses, bottle openers, or other Harley-Davidson branded products. The remaining 1.8% to complete the

100% revenue streams is consisting of “Other” (1%) and “licensing” (0.8%). The segment of “others” entails services provided to dealerships such as training courses or specific software packages that dealerships require. In 2018 Harley-Davidson generated revenue of \$4,968,646 through motorcycle sales and related products.

Harley-Davidson has dealerships spread across the globe to assist their sales. In total, there are 1,535 dealerships, with nearly half (691) in the United States. The second largest group of Dealerships are coming from the EMEA market (Europe, Middle East, Africa), with 412 dealerships. These two groups make up over 70% of Harley’s total dealership numbers. The last 29% are from the Asia Pacific, Canada, and Latin American markets with 299, 69, and 64 dealerships respectively (Harley-Davidson, 2018).

1.6.3 Market Share

This information has been provided by the DVLA and is being placed in relation to information gathered by Harley-Davidson Annual Report. Harley-Davidson has reported within their report that from 2018 that 228,051 Harley-Davidson motorcycles have been sold in total. The United States are making over half of the total sales figures with 132,868 Harley-Davidson being sold in the US. The second largest group comes from Europe with 39,942 motorcycles of the Milwaukee based brand being sold within this market. Other members of the EMEA, excluding Europe, account for 5,423 motorcycles sales (Harley-Davidson, 2018). Europe in itself signals to be the second largest market for Harley-Davidson across the globe. Outside the United States, it provides the ideal location for a Case Study research.

In total the European Market outlined that 263,750 motorcycles were registered in Europe and Harley-Davidson providing 41,179 motorcycles of this total. This leaves Harley-Davidson a European market share of 15.6% (Harley-Davidson, 2018).

For motorcycles in the United Kingdom no information was provided by Harley-Davidson and, instead, DVLA figures allowed for the creation of an understanding of the British motorcycle market. There are currently 49,451 Harley-Davidson registered in the United Kingdom. This includes models dating back to 1994. In total 1,270,216 motorcycles are registered in the UK. Harley-Davidson up to this time offers 386 models that have been registered within the United Kingdom. The DVLA currently has 8640 different models from various manufacturers registered. Harley provides 4.5%

of all models sold in the United Kingdom and has a total market share of sales of 3.9%. Harley-Davidson's most popular model according to figures provided by the DVLA is the Sportster XLH 883, a motorcycle costing £8,895 (Maidstone, 2018), and positioned 90th for brand and models sold in the United Kingdom.

1.6.4 Motorcycle and Harley-Davidson consumer demographic

Overall, motorcycling is a male orientated environment. Based on a recent report conducted by the Motorcycle industry Council (MIC) "among all age groups, women make up 19% of motorcycle owners (Brown, 2018). Whilst female motorcyclists are on the rise, 19% of female motorcyclists today compared to below 10% ten years ago (Brown, 2018), they account for minority of Harley-Davidson consumers. The Harley-Davidson consumer has an average age of 47 (Kelleher, 2013)

On the basis of this, the decision was made to focus between 40 to 60 years of age. Additionally, the gender specifications are in accordance with the majority of motorcyclists which is indicated to be at 81% male motorcyclists.

This research does not argue that female motorcyclists do not exist but rather attempts to understand consumption behaviour of the majority of Harley-Davidson consumers in more detail. As a suggestion to future research, the minority demographic of young female motorcyclists as a rising group may be of interest for future developments.

1.6.5 Recent developments and future impacts

The motivation of the research was to find the reasoning for middle aged men to purchase a Harley-Davidson. Since then political changes have occurred that could impact on the findings of the research shortly after its submission. Due to the recently released, at point of writing in 2018, President Trump has made changes to the taxation of products going to and coming from Europe. This will have an impact on the export of Harley-Davidson motorcycles and every motorcycle shipped will be taxed 25% on top of the already high purchase costs. In some cases, this could increase the price by up to £5000 (Koch, 2018). Having to pay a quarter more for the purchase of the same product may prevent some consumption in the future. This may have the impact that the Harley-Davidson motorcycle company will struggle to find buyers for their products in what is already a limited market. Although dealerships remain with the assumption that consumers will still buy their motorcycles regardless of the price tags. This is in accordance with the research that also assumed that consumers will not completely turn away from Harley and will still purchase

motorcycles and accept the additional costs as part of it. It will have an impact on the consumption but at this stage it is too soon to determine how large the impact will be.

Harley-Davidson has already indicated the intention to move its production outside of the United States, to one of its production sites located in Australia, Brazil, India, and Thailand. This would allow them to bypass the current import tax of 25% (Werner, 2018). This would also mean that Harley-Davidson's previous position of predominant American manufacturer would change. Prior to the official announcement of the import tax, sales increased by up to 30% in the European market (Werner, 2018), as consumers wanted to fulfil their dream of owning a Harley-Davidson before the import tax became official, according to Christian Arnezeder, vice-president for Central Europe Harley-Davidson (Werner, 2018).

It was recently shown that the Harley-Davidson company "barely broke even in the last quarter of the year in which the struggling American icon got caught up in President Donald Trump's trade wars. The motorcycle maker's shares plunged the most in a year." (Coppola, 2019). Additionally, Harley-Davidson's sales have dropped in 2018 which may also be related back to Harley-Davidson shifting its production away from the United States leaving American consumers disappointed in the company. Harley additionally "is having trouble attracting younger riders and plans to offer cheaper bikes and sell more clothing and gear" (Coppola, 2019).

In the last months Harley-Davidson has released a line of electric vehicles including an electric Harley-Davidson, a mountain bike with an electric engine, and a scooter. Through this Harley-Davidson is looking to the future and to bridge the gap between the older and younger consumers.

Future research will need to determine its impact and see how Harley-Davidson is able to cope with the additional taxation on their products. Currently, Harley-Davidson, a symbol of the American way of life (Koch, 2018), may be in significant difficulty as a result of President Trump's "America First" approach.

1.6.6 Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and threats (SWOT analysis)

1.6.6.1 Strengths

One of Harley-Davidson's main strengths is the strong brand image created over the years. It now has a legendary status amongst other globally known brands such as

Coca-Cola, BMW, Porsche, or Ferrari (Esch et al., 2012). This may create a strong urge towards Harley-Davidson from its consumers on the basis of its fame.

Another strength that Harley-Davidson has managed to build was a sub-culture based around its products. This is not just profitable for Harley-Davidson but also allows the consumers to experience the brand differently. It adds to the mystique of Harley-Davidson as the consumer is able to express his consumption through various means (Schouten & McAlexander, 1993). This can include branded leather jackets or T-shirts, and can also be extended to the consumer's home life of cups and glasses, and in some cases may even reach the extreme measure of having the Harley-Davidson logo tattooed on the body of the consumer. Through Harley-Davidson's own chapter of the Harley-Davidson Owner Group, the company has managed to build a direct way to enter the subculture of the brand. The only requirement to enter is the ownership of a Harley-Davidson and the membership fees, which is waived for the first year after purchase. This facilitates participation within the sub-culture of Harley-Davidson.

Through the sub-culture, Harley-Davidson created a loyal consumer base, which is stable enough to support Harley-Davidson during years of turmoil such as a recession or other economic or brand related issues.

1.6.6.2 Weaknesses

Whilst Harley-Davidson has a strong image and loyal consumers it also has weaknesses. For example, in the limited choice of products (Greenspan, 2017). Only 6 production types, within variations of the models, do not represent a great choice for consumers. It also focuses on choppers and does not allow for variations from this main product type. Other brands such as Suzuki, offer a broad range of products, including speed bikes, cruisers, scooters, off-road, and Enduro motorcycles. These production constraints limit the reach of the company. Whilst some see it as being true to its origins, others see it as a potential downfall for Harley-Davidson since they are not able to attract a variety of different consumers.

As stated in the previous section, Harley-Davidson has released an electric motorcycle range that would not be automatically associated with Harley-Davidson. This includes a motorcycle, an electric bicycle, and an electric scooter.

Furthermore, Harley-Davidson is seen as an expensive motorcycle brand and often behind its competitors in terms of technological advances. Harley-Davidson's motorcycles do not have a complicated board computer that shows the speed, engine revolutions, satellite navigation, or complicated ride settings. It offers the bare experience of motorcycling. The purchasing costs are also increased by Harley-Davidson producing its motorcycles predominantly in the United States, where labour costs are higher. However, the brand is making advances that would relocate some production outside the United States, as described in chapter 1.6.5.

1.6.6.3 Opportunity

Based on Harley-Davidson's current focus there is a lot of potential in regard to global expansion of production. This could be a significant opportunity for the company to not just reduce the costs of the motorcycles but also to increase its global positioning.

Similarly, Harley-Davidson's current weakness of a limited model range could be turned into an opportunity. By increasing the product range to other types of motorcycles, including scooter, or lighter and faster motorcycles Harley could potentially bridge the gap between its older consumers and potential younger consumers. This diversification may already be in progress but it is yet to be seen how the consumers will respond to these changes in the traditional American firm.

Greenspan (2017) stated that Harley-Davidson needs to establish connections that would increase its market reach. One such alliance with Lehman Trikes may be fruitful in the long run. Other alliances could potentially mean that Harley not only diversifies its model range but also reaches new perspectives in terms of modernising its developments.

1.6.6.4 Threats

Harley-Davidson main threat is its competitors. Whilst it has a very secure first spot in the United States in terms of sales and revenue creation, it lacks similar success in the European market. According to Statista (2018), the top three companies in terms of motorcycle sales in Europe are; 1.Honda (20,126), 2.Yamaha (12,442), 3. BMW (9,013). Harley-Davidson struggles in the European and UK market to secure a similar strength as it has in the US.

Additionally, the threats of imitations is significant for the brand (Greenspan, 2017). Harley-Davidson motorcycles are often very heavy, loud and have comfortable riding

position. They also do not have extremely complicated engines. Through this particular part the threat of imitations are great and the American brand needs to be cautious that Harley is not being replicated by other manufacturers in the long run. Currently this threat is not imminent as, more than the bike model alone it would take many years for competitors to match Harley in terms of loyalty and sub-culture.

1.6.7 Clubs and Motorcycle Groups

Motorcycle clubs have a long tradition for Harley-Davidson and attribute a lot to the image that the brand has today. The first motorcycle clubs for Harley-Davidson appeared in a post- world war environment with former soldiers meeting up and riding their motorcycles. In the 1980s Harley-Davidson itself formed the Harley-Davidson Owner Group (HOG) and used these groups to maintain consumer loyalty. Previous research used these motorbike groups to get access to the community of Harley-Davidson (Schembri, 2009). The HOG chapters are the largest factory sponsored motorcycle group in the world (Museum, 2019), which within six years of formation numbered over 90.000 members. By 2000 this increased to over half a million members riding Harley-Davidson motorcycles in affiliation to the HOG chapters (Museum, 2019).

Participation in clubs or chapters are not just limited to Harley-Davidson and the consumer may chose a chapter that fits more to his personal identity. Riding groups such as the Trinity Road bikers are a Christian motorcycle club (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), other clubs use the motorcycle to help others through charity work such as the Royal British Legion Riders Branch (RBLR). The possibilities for a motorcyclist to join a motorcycle group are endless and can be adjusted to what he desires, whether it be a small group of personal friends organising motorcycle rides or part of a bigger organization from the British Motorcyclists Federation. The latter was contacted for information about its chapters and figures but is yet to respond.

However, it is not a requirement to be part of a club in order to be a full member of the Harley-Davidson community. Spending time at the local Harley-Davidson dealership or travelling to motorcycle events strengthen affiliation to the brand rather than a specific club.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

Chapter Two- Literature Review

2.1.5 Consumer Behaviour and Hedonic Consumption

2.1.1 Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour allows researcher to look at consumption from a variety of aspects including psychological, social or personal aspects. Its official definition is as follows “The study of individuals, groups, or organisations and the processes they use to select, secure, use, and dispose of products, services, experiences, or ideas to satisfy needs and the impacts that these processes have on the consumer and society.” (Perner, 2018). Solomon et al. (2006) outlined it as the process of decision making and the physical activity involved in acquiring, evaluating, using, and disposing of goods and services to satisfy needs and wants. Additionally, it is not just the spending behaviour that is being examined but rather introduces an approach in which consumption in a post-purchase environment is being experienced. It is also important to note that pleasure can only be experienced during the moment of consumption, however the fulfilling sensation of consumption occurs only retrospectively (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; Seligman, 2011). This can range from a satisfaction and gained happiness to subcultural influences in a consumption-based environment. It allows the outlining of consumption reasoning shown by consumers in regard to preferred products and allows them to reach a higher state of happiness. Therefore, it is an interesting field for possible advertising or marketing campaigns from a consumer behaviour perspective. However, whilst this may be the case, it involves higher complications that require an understanding of psychology, sociology, in addition to (sub-) cultural influences.

2.1.2 Utilitarian vs Hedonic consumption

When looking at consumer behaviour an important differentiation has to be made between two methods of consumption, utilitarian consumption and hedonic consumption. Utilitarian consumption, as the name suggests, is the consumption of goods that are important for the consumer's general life this includes goods such as food, home, utilities (gas and electricity), and medication. All of these are focused on the consumers' well-being within basic parameters of life. However, hedonic consumption can be described as everything that exceeds these parameters and sometimes is referred to as luxury items products that may be classified as hedonic consumption, such as the following examples, sports cars, villas, extensive holidays,

and jewellery. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) offered the following definition, "Hedonic consumption designates those facets of consumer behaviour that relate to the multisensory, fantasy and emotive aspects of one's experience with products" (p92). It, therefore, draws the line between what is required for a consumers' life at a basic level to what the consumer desires in order to reach a pleasurable end. Anything that may exceed the normal parameters of utilitarian and necessary is combined under hedonic consumption. Furthermore, hedonic consumption is focused on the consumer's satisfaction and happiness as these products are generally based on bringing joy and pleasure to the consumers' lives. Consumption of hedonic products is highly motivated by the meaning that they can have for the consumer as "People buy products not only for that they can do but also for what they mean" (Levy, 1959, p118; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p92).

2.1.3 Experiential & Material Good Consumption

Generally, there needs to be a differentiation between two types of consumption, experiential and material. Experiential consumption can vary in nature, but examples are restaurant visits, travel, holiday, or theatre visits (Tully et al., 2015). In contrast to this specific kind of hedonic consumption are material goods of a hedonic nature simply being able to be defined as basics exceeding material goods and therefore representing tangible assets. The consumer's preferences in regard to consuming either an experiential or materialistic product depends on a variety of factors which will come into the decision-making process and ultimately the product selection that is most suitable for the current situation the consumer finds him/herself in at the point of decision-making. It has been argued by previous research that experiential consumption is generally preferred as it creates the highest level of satisfaction from a consumer perspective. However, this may vary when considering significant investments under monetary constraint. The definition for feeling financial constraint is not solely based on the financial backing that the consumer has but rather the emotional desire for the consumption of purchasing luxury items (Mazzocco et al., 2012). During emotions of financial constraint, it is argued that a shift away from experiential consumption occurs and preferences for long-lasting material goods increase (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003; Tully et al., 2015).

2.1.4 Gender Profile

A differentiation has to be made concerning gender and gender-specific consumption. There are a variety of different attributes that influence consumption from a male or female perspective, which leads to a different consumption focus which may either enhance or hinder consumption. However, when looking at high-risk leisure activities it has been argued that male and female differences dominate with an increased risk-seeking attitude in males more than in women (Byrnes et al., 1999; Hernández-Nicolás et al., 2019). Byrnes et al., 1999, indicated, in their meta-analysis, that males are more inclined to take risks than women. This is based on 16 different types of risk taking aspects which include choice dilemma tasks (Kogan & Wallach, 1964), framing tasks (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981) and others (Byrnes et al., 1999). The gender selection is also becoming important when looking at a male-dominated environment such as the Harley-Davidson subculture, with women often being the riding companion rather than in the driving saddle.

2.1.5 Age Profile

Additionally, age selection is an important aspect when looking at consumption. When comparing older and younger consumers a variety of significant similarities but also differences can be identified. In regards to the similarities older consumers, as well as younger consumers, “overlap in abilities, preferences, and goals” (Cole et al., 2008, p1). However, differences can be identified in relation to brand loyalty which appears to be significantly higher when looking at older consumers and automobile brand selection (Lambert-Pandraud et al., 2005). Furthermore, whilst the consumers’ abilities are similar throughout the generations, differences can be identified when looking at risk consumptions and how this risk is being accepted and handled. Older consumers tend to be less risk-seeking than the younger generations are. Whilst they might not be entirely risk averse there is a different approach to the risk than indicated by younger consumers, due to a higher level of responsibilities in the consumers lives reducing the likelihood of the olders consumers to “go for it” (Holt & Thompson, 2004, Borau & Bonnefon, 2019). The age limitations have been set at 40 to 60 years of age, relating closely to the Harley’s average owner age of 47 (Kelleher, 2013), allowing the researcher to conduct the interviews with the majority of Harley-Davidson consumers and ultimately being able to outline the motivations for their frivolous hedonic consumption behaviour.

2.1.6 Review of discussion

Consumer behaviour combines two important fields of psychology and sociology in order to be able to understand consumption, decision-making, and preferences. Consumer behaviour comes into play especially when focusing on hedonic products, products which exceed the usual standards and may be defined as luxury items. In contrast to utilitarian products, hedonic consumption signifies only the desire for the product and what it could mean to the consumer rather than only having utilitarian attributes for the end user. Additionally, a differentiation has to be made in regard to what kind of hedonic product is at hand. On the one hand, experiential consumption represents intangible assets such as holidays or theatre visits, whereas material goods indicate tangible hedonic consumption such as a sports car, motorbike, or a large flat screen television set.

Age and gender distinctions have to be drawn as different approaches to consumption are represented by each gender and age group. As an example, risk-seeking or risk-averse attitudes can be used to indicate a potential difference between these two groups. It has been argued by previous researchers that male consumers tend to be more risk seeking in regard to their consumption whereas the female consumers indicate a more risk-averse attitude. Additionally, age can be an influencing factor when looking at decision-making processes, older consumers tend to remain brand loyal whereas younger consumers have the tendency to change brands. This is an important factor to take into consideration when discussing age specific consumption.

The decision to focus on middle-aged (40-60 years of age) male Harley-Davidson consumers has been made in order to combine the two most dominant consumer demographics that Harley presents in its consumer base. The Harley-Davidson subculture is predominantly male orientated and has an average age of 47 (Kelleher, 2013), therefore the research has a strong focus on the key demographics of Harley-Davidson consumers.

2.2 What are the psychological, social, and cultural factors that elicit hedonic consumption amongst British males between the ages of 40 and 60?

Our behaviour is constantly being influenced by factors that are external or internally based, ultimately influencing our spending behaviour. External factors are social and cultural aspects, whilst psychological factors are the basis for internal motivators of consumption. Consumption of a different goods is affected by different motivators to varying degrees with hedonic consumption exhibiting strong influences of all three elements of consumption. Hedonic consumption indicates a preference or focus on pleasure and can be divided into two categories of either experiential consumption or materialistic purchases. The former uses examples of purchases that can be related to specific events, including holidays, action events, romantic adventures and the generation of positive memories which may be reflected upon. Material goods are purchases such as sports cars, boats, and large houses exceeding the usual standard.

2.2.1 Psychological Factors

Whilst both elements have a specific outcome the thought processes of the decision making and belong to the same categories of unnecessary purchases, different motivators drive one or the other purchase. Material purchases can be driven through social pressures or attempts to indicate a specific social standpoint in which cultural aspects play a large role. Whereas, the intentions behind experiential purchases lay more within the area of personal consumption and thus outline stronger preferences towards psychological influences driving hedonic consumption (Schwarz, 2004; Esch et al., 2012, p76). As previous research has indicated experiential purchases are preferred over material purchases and generate a higher level of satisfaction (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003; Van Boven & Ashworth, 2007; Gilovich et al., 2015; Tully et al., 2015).

2.2.2 Social Factors

It is important to analyse the impact of social elements that may influence the hedonic consumption of middle-aged men. The social aspects influencing consumption are complex, it is much more than simple peer pressure influencing an individual as the consumption bestows the right of participation in a new social milieu. It can be compared to a quest for identity rather than mere consumption with the social community being able to establish itself as a strong exterior force. However, the decision to participate needs to follow a certain order as the individual needs to be

willing to participate in the first place. Without affection towards the community, decision-making processes are only driven by more narrow elements which may result in non-consumption. Only consumers who are open to participating experience the pressures of the sub-society and an increased desire to re-experience the community.

2.2.3 Cultural Factors

Closely linked to social influences, is another exterior force that can influence spending behaviour in regard to hedonic consumption. Cultural impulses are very strong, especially with subcultures, and the differentiation between social and cultural influences is blurred generating a perceived double pressure of the two working together as one on an individual. Looking at subcultures, it is important for an individual to accept the community but more importantly for the community to accept an individual (Celsi et al, 1993). However, these influences, similar to social factors, can only be at work once the individual has committed to the community and can affect future spending. Although a difference has to be made within the cultural area, as an attraction towards specific subcultures is in place prior to the purchase, partially created through representation from media channels (Holt & Thompson, 2004; O'Sullivan & Shankar, 2019). It is the creation of an image, not through subcultures but rather through the overarching culture. Said influences can include filmographic elements, or advertisements of an ideal man, who is not only attractive but free (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Whilst it is not possible to turn back time, it is possible to appear younger and freer through consumption. Thus, cultural influences are created that can impact middle-aged men who have a desire to appear in the described manner. This specific exposure and image that is being created from a younger age in which the consumers' future decisions can already be influenced (Connell et al., 2014).

2.2.4 Limitations

Whilst the current research will focus on specific locations, examples from literature have to be considered from different locations and cultures, predominantly North America due to the majority of research having been conducted within the regions of the United States.

2.2.5 Psychology

2.2.5.1 Emotions

Emotions are an important aspect of the proposed research on hedonic consumption and are a basic element of psychology. A hedonic product is offering a means to a pleasurable end (Alba & Williams, 2013) therefore a distinction between means and ends has to be listed in the discussion into what motivates hedonic consumption. A pleasurable end varies amongst individuals and can therefore be expressed in different scenarios and their according emotions such as excitement and calm (Moglinger et al., 2012; Alba & Williams, 2013), depending on the individual consumer's perception of the essence underlining motivators such as passions, appetite, and desires (Bloom, 2010). Acquired taste might differ and relies on the individual's desires and preferences (Rozin, 1999), this especially comes into play when looking at high-risk leisure activities which bear a significant risk of harm. Motorcycling certainly falls within the community of high-risk leisure activities, such as skydiving, kayaking, whitewater rafting and gambling, which do not just represent a desire for thrill and pleasure-seeking activities but also provide a sense of community and group membership, self-expression, and personal growth and achievement (Hopkinson & Pujari, 1999; Alba & Williams, 2013).

2.2.5.2 Experiential consumption

As already outlined, long-lasting material goods are preferred over experiential aspects, however, neither point excludes long-term enjoyment as a driving force towards hedonic consumption. Long-term enjoyment can be achieved through a multitude of facets such as storytelling about previous experiences or the active execution of a certain desire (Holt, 1995). Both aspects deny the claim that consumption terminates at the moment of purchase but rather suggest that consumptions continues up until the point of replacement, such as making new memories which are superior to previous ones or terminating participation in the activity. In this way, the point of purchase should be regarded as merely a starting point of consumption (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), building upon Boyd and Levy (1963), describe emotional consumption on an experiential level and the expected emotional elements that will direct purchasing behaviour towards or away from certain products. As previously mentioned, the consumption is not the purchase itself, it is the usage of the product that excites and allows the consumer to experience (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982), it involves "a steady flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun" (Holbrook &

Hirschman, 1982, p132). The product is a symbol for those emotions and expresses the consumers desire for enjoyment which could not take place without it. The symbolic meaning can only be described by the consumer itself, and as it is a personal reflection of oneself, the level of interest from others is of little relevance (Levy, 1959, 1980).

Consumption may generate emotions of pleasure and happiness, however, a fulfilling enjoyment can only be experienced retrospectively (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; Seligman, 2011; Alba & Williams, 2013). Thus, consumption will require the reflection of the consumer and an emotional learning process will begin as a result, offering the opportunity for evaluations of successful consumption and the need to re-experience them (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982).

2.2.5.3 Long-lasting material goods with Experiential Consumption

The findings from Tully et al. (2015) indicate a strong purchase behaviour towards long-lasting material goods over purchases of experience, such as holidays or restaurant visits, under financial constraints. Whilst this might be an aspect of significant consideration towards the research, it is unclear how this changes if the monetary investments are increased. Furthermore, it is possible to argue that Harley-Davidson represents both a material good and an experience. Whilst the material good aspect may not need to be justified, the experience has to be. The experiential characteristic has to be further developed. A motorcycle is offering an opportunity to experience joy and fulfilment through drives, even if it just a short drive on a summers day, whilst continuing to be a material good. As pointed out, “earlier research has led to the conclusion that experiences can lead to a greater long-term happiness than material goods” (Tully et al., 2015, p62). Consumers tend to think more about past experiences than about purchases (Tully et al., 2015). However, as Harley-Davidson is offering both aspects, a long-lasting material good which may deliver long-term happiness, and also reducing the need for future spending (Tully et al., 2015). This might offer an appropriate reason for consumers to purchase a Harley-Davidson despite emotional concerns of financial constraint and taking more financial risks by purchasing a luxury good such as a motorcycle. As Tully et. al (2015, p66) identified, consumers “who consider their financial constraints have an increased preference for material goods over experiences - even when those material goods are more frivolous and wasteful”. However, it is yet to be understood how far this frivolous spending behaviour will go, as no boundaries have been established in experimental research.

2.2.5.4 Brand exposure and Creation of Emotional Attachment

It is important to note that Harley-Davidson is and should be perceived as a strong brand (Esch et al., 2012), although the company likes to use the word legend or legendary frequently, Esch et al (2012) have identified that strong brands, for which they used BMW, eBay, Coca-Cola, Harley-Davidson, Langnese, Lamborghini, Porsche, and Ferrari, have a strong element of association to those declared strong brands than to other weaker brands. Ultimately leading to the point that strong brands can be selected on the basis of experiential information alone (Esch et al., 2012). "When consumers use declarative knowledge, they access attributes, facts and knowledge about the target stimulus. When they access experiential information, they attend to their personal feelings and experiences" (Schwarz, 2004; Esch et al., 2012, p76). The element that is of interest is the level of experienced emotions, negative or positive, people can relate to specific brands in some form or other; simply on the basis of brand awareness and presence through either direct or indirect exposure to the brand (Esch et al., 2012). Emotional desires have to be regarded as a strong influential factor within the concepts of decision making, as emotions such as love, hate, and jealousy will override the consumer's ability for deductive economic decision making (Dichter, 1960; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). This shows the importance of psychological elements within a decision-making process by closely relating these processes back to emotional attributes.

2.2.5.5 Anticipation/ Delayed Consumption

Characteristics of emotions do not just emerge during or after the consumption but in fact help generate positive anticipation of the consumption which will intensify the consumption itself as well as post-event reflection (Van Boven & Ashworth, 2007; Alba & Williams, 2013). This anticipation can be translated directly onto the motorcyclist. This anticipation effect will present itself during periods of cold weather, during which the motorcyclist tends to avoid using their vehicle and will select an automobile instead. Summer months account for the most motorcyclist activity whilst winter months the fewest (Masker, 2014). Therefore anticipation will increase during the wait for warmer and more motorcycle-friendly conditions. Anticipation will emerge annually and therefore intensify the experience of the consumption itself.

However, anticipation may decline over excessively prolonged periods and therefore a decline of anticipated emotions will necessarily follow as a consequence. Thus, the "highest levels of anticipated enjoyment with medium-length waits, which are long

enough for them to build up some anticipation, but not so long that irritation can set in” (Chan & Mukhopadhyay, 2010; Alba & Williams, 2013, p8).

2.2.6 Social

Humans rely on social interaction for survival, although these social interactions extend to trivial questions other than survival. In today’s society, there is a strong exterior influence on purchasing behaviour embodied by social influences.

2.2.6.1 Communitas

Previous research has outlined a strong motivation to seek and participate in communities in which one feels welcomed and respected. Celsi et al. (1993) have introduced an aspect of communitas to the field of sociology, in which the pathway of a novice to expert skydiver was researched. Whilst several challenges come together with the consumption of skydiving, it still fails to outline a critical aspect and that is the decision-making process to enter the high-risk leisure subculture of skydiving in the first place and this has been a downfall in several other research approaches (see Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). By not including the original motivation to participate in a different social environment, important aspects are ignored or only marginally considered, as a change of social groupings or addition to one’s social environment may be caused by external or internal factors that drive oneself to or away from something. In the case of Celsi et al. (1995) the appreciation for skydiving or other high-risk leisure activities can start from a gift voucher that gets one “hooked” or through an external persuasion that gets one motivated to participate, providing a form of peer pressure. However, it will always remain a decision on the micro level (personal) that drives the consumption. Modern society is exposed to a variety of consumption shaping stimuli such as mass media, technology, and social specialisations (Celsi et al., 1993; Holt and Thompson, 2004; Kozinets et al., 2016) which can also be classified under cultural stimuli and will be analysed at a later stage in more detail.

2.2.6.2 Satisfaction through Social Interaction/ Consumption as Integration

Social influences are important, especially when focusing on the field of hedonic consumption, as it is an area in which consumption is not necessary but a consumption of the ‘free will’ and joy. By adding a social element to consumption, a higher state of satisfaction can be achieved as in a way one does not invest money into a personal desire but rather participation in a community, experiential rather than

solely material. As Levy argued “people buy things not only for what they can do but also for what they mean” (Levy, 1959, p118) or as Holt (1995) describes it in his four dimension model, using consumption as integration and thus manipulating the meaning of the object. A meaning can not only be derived from a personal point of view but is created and elevated through a community of similar core values and understanding, therefore placing a social aspect at an elevated meaning. Whilst objects, such as a painting by one’s child, may be of high personal value to oneself it does not indicate the same ability to create a shared community.

2.2.6.3 Social Structure of the Harley-Davidson Subculture

The social structure of Harley-Davidson can be seen as very unique and important to understand the underlying motivations for purchasing this specific hedonic product instead of a cheaper Japanese motorcycle. It is the mystique that attracts people and traps them in the desire to purchase a Harley. It is the charm to “partake symbolically in an outlaw mystique without ever venturing into the realm of the outlaw biker.” (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995, p58). This variety of biker can be seen in different kinds of groupings outlined by Schouten and McAlexander (1995, p49) from an article written by the “The Independent Biker, a Bay-Area-based free biker paper”, also capturing the sometimes-offensive language that is being used within the motorcycling community of Harley-Davidson:

RUBies: Rich Urban Bikers

SEWERS: Suburban Weekend Riders

RIOTS: Retired Idiots On Tour

MUGWUMPS: My Ugly Goldwing Was Upsetting My Peers

AHABS: Aspiring Hardass Bikers

BASTARDS: Bought A Sportster, Therefore A Radical Dude

IGLOOS: I Got the Look, Own One Soon

HOOTS: Have One Ordered, True Story

ASSHOLES: assholes

However, whilst being united under the brand of Harley-Davidson there can friction between groups. This is based on the experiences and level of identification from

individual groupings. Celsi et al. (1993) mention the importance of experience within a community and the resulting hierarchy of respect. Experience can be related to two factors (1) the number of years of participation within the subculture and/or (2) willingness to participate and commit to the subculture indications for this be found in the number of skydives (or jumps) or the number of miles ridden on the Harley-Davidson motorcycle (Celsi et al., 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). The former is important as frictions between the “real bikers” and those insultingly referred to as “poseurs” based on the number of years of participation with Harley motorcycles, especially prior to Harley-Davidson’s reformation and distancing from Outlaw gangs. The latter can also be extended to participation in well-known rallies such as Daytona Beach Bike Week or Sturgis or more European focused rallies such as European Bike Week at Lake Faak. Daytona Bike Week and the European Bike Week were both visited by the researcher to get a better understanding of the lifestyle that consumers are purchasing with their motorcycle. It also allowed for a more detailed questioning during the data collection phase of the research. Through the establishment of social pressures, a member will face two opportunities either to continue to participate and invest more financial assets and time into the subculture or to leave. Thus, emphasising the illustrated point of the high standpoint of social aspects within personal decision-making once participation is decided to continue. Aside from such issues within the subculture of Harley-Davidson it is the appreciation and the purchase itself that unites the Harley consumers and forms a bond in which “a welder can sit down with a bank president and speak the same language” (Herzog, 1993).

The ethnographic approach of the research conducted by Celsi et al (1993) and Schouten and McAlexander (1995) allowed long-term research participation, establishing close relationships with insiders and creating social bonds. Both have identified a formation and shaping of a new identity of the participants and also themselves, “motives, initially normative and externally derived, evolve to motives of efficacy, identity formation, and transcendent experiences” (Celsi et al., 1993, p21) and the perception of a product by a description “a sanctuary in which to experience temporary self-transformation” (Celsi et al., 1993, p21).

Having a strong element of social interactions and social hierarchy depending on one’s willingness to participate and invest in a specific hedonic product means that the factor of the social environment has to be regarded as a contributing factor to the

purchasing behaviour of consumers, especially when looking at a unique subculture where the consumption of a product is the main focus.

2.2.7 Cultural

Cultural and social aspects are very closely linked to one another, especially when focusing on smaller subcultures such as the motorcycling community where social understandings are involved in creating the subculture.

2.2.7.1 Status & Identity Seeking

Within Western culture a strong emphasis is placed upon consumption for the appearance of power and wealth and it can be argued that hedonic products are purchased for non-hedonic reasons as a means to illustrate social status and identity creation (Belk, 1988; Alba & Williams, 2013). Additionally, these factors are also strengthened further through a cultural means and the participation within the consumption culture. Culture does not just outline a capitalist background or religious influences, but moreover allows other elements such as the media to influence hedonic consumption on a subtler level. Consumption is impacted by exterior forces in which culture plays an immediate role through different channels. Furthermore, the influence of a subculture can influence decision-making processes of a series of purchases, where an initial purchase is a starting point for subsequent purchases.

Under the assumed circumstances of a street where neighbours are living closely together and have close interactions with one another, this scenario can be seen as a created subculture which came through the necessity of living together. However, after a couple of years, one neighbour decides to renovate their house, thus outshining the other houses on the street. Even though there may be no necessity to do so, the pressure enforced by a member of the subculture creates an impulse to keep up with the higher achieving members. Thus, creating a wave of renovation works conducted within the community.

2.2.7.2 Cultural Pressures in relation to Communitas

Pressures and exterior forces generated by subcultures are strong enough to change or increase consumption from within its community. The concept developed by Celsi et al (1993) of Communitas describes a variety of these elements, it not only symbolises the strong impact of the community on one's personal perception but influence one's spending behaviour in an increased manner. Schouten and

McAlexander (1995) agree with the findings of Celsi et al. (1993) and state that the spending behaviour is adapted to the purchasing patterns from within the subculture in order to be perceived as a strong member who cares about being part of the said subculture. It is this element of care that is not just appreciated but also expected of one's members. However, both Celsi et al.'s research (1993) and Schouten McAlexander (1995) experience a post-purchase environment and not the actual decision-making process to participate in the first place.

2.2.7.3 Media Influences and the search for the Man-of-Action Hero

Additionally, other cultural forces play an important role, these forces include predominantly the media in this case through the interpretation of the ideal man thus placing pressure upon men and ultimately forcing them to compensate for the lacking aspects within their lives. Furthermore, as Holt and Thompson (2004) argued it leads to the creation of the man-of-action hero. This is not just the represented movie hero or masculine appearing model from advertising, but rather the representation that comes along with the image. The element of freedom has a highly significant role within modern society, as it indicates three aspects which might influence the purchasing behaviour of consumers of hedonic products. (1) The consumer indicates, through the purchases, of being of a certain social standard and wealth and (2) that the consumer does not only have the money to utilise in such a manner but rather also has the time on his hands to participate and experience the purchased product, thus having a certain level of personal freedom. (3) Consumers of high-risk leisure activities indicate a variety of emotional attributes, or at least generating an appearance of such attributes, these include thrill seeking and dramatic experiences which might make them more attractive or at least creates a personal illusion of a higher attractiveness (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Holt (1995) describes this approach to consumption as his third dimension of consumption, consumption as classification. Additionally, to points (2) and (3) it can be argued that this behaviour can be compared to more of a cowboy or western frontiersman behaviour who do not allow the rules of society to pressure them (Holt & Thompson, 2004, a life away from hierarchies and organisational dependence. Through this deliberation of the confined world, those who participate within this unique subculture are taking flight from conformity. Whilst it might be a surprising argument, as the participants would like to be regarded as strong and independent by representing their masculinity through the hedonic consumption of Harley-Davidson products. Socio-economic changes have forced male society members to express their threatened masculinity through other means.

In specific sectors, jobs have become “less secure and more routinized” (Holt & Thompson, 2004, p 425) and women have gained more independence thus threatening the breadwinner position of the men (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Through consumption of the masculine and dominant appearing motorcycle, men “experience a sense liberation and personal autonomy from constraints of polite society” (Holt & Thompson, 2004, p 426; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). This personal autonomy can often be heard by motorcyclists being described as freedom and is also utilised by Harley-Davidson as a descriptive term for their products and the identity of the firm. Thus, strengthening the idea of a free man seeking freedom from a bureaucratic scheme and entrapment of the self in the “polite society” as it has been outlined in literature.

However, through the attempt of revolting against society and the norms of the culture they are participating more in it by adding a personal representation of the ideal man and attempt to copy the image created by several channels of the media and the present culture.

2.2.7.3.1 Limitations

Whilst interesting and important points have been mentioned, it also outlines specific limitations to a general understanding of consumption. Holt and Thompson only conducted their research on American participants and thus have been influenced by the American culture, specifically stating the desire to recreate a western frontier behaviour can be seen as a reason for the creation of the modern-day man-of-action hero. Whilst it is a very important aspect to outline the underlying reasoning for the purchasing behaviour, it may not be a universally applicable reason. Cultural differences between Europe and North America come into play, desires to replicate a western frontier attitude may not be applicable to the European culture. Although it has been argued that part of the success of Harley-Davidson within other markets outside the United States is related to the global fetish for old Americana (Maz, 1985).

A research of the kind that Holt and Thompson (2004) have conducted has not yet been introduced in the European market, the man-of-action hero is still to be found in Europe. His relevance will be more significant for comparison if Scottish Harley-Davidson owners have a similar attitude as the interviewees in Holt and Thompson’s (2004) research. Comparatively, similar issues have been shown in the research by Celsi et al. (1993) and Schouten and McAlexander (1995) who researched, as previously shown, mentalities of subculture participation. Schouten and McAlexander

(1995) conducted research focused on the Harley-Davidson, they missed significant points such as the reasoning for the initial decision to immerse oneself in the Harley subculture. Whilst their research was conducted from an ethnographic perspective, the focus was on becoming a Harley rider in order to be accepted in the described subculture but did not address the process of going from a non-rider, to a motorcyclist, to a Harley-Davidson owner. Schouten and McAlexander' (1995) vision was blurred due to an outlined timeline that they followed but disregarded a process of decision making of going from a non-rider to a Harley -Davidson consumer. Similar points of criticism between Schouten and McAlexander (1995) and Holt and Thompson (2004) can be outlined, including the focus on geographic limitations within the United States of America. Harley-Davidson, whilst being an American icon of motorcycling, faces different cultures and ideologies within a global market. The company requires an openness from their consumer to the Americanization of the culture, where the consumer desires a similar representation of cowboy behaviour.

2.2.5 Review of discussion

Celsi et al. (1993) describe a high risk leisure, a form of catharsis with a clear beginning, middle and end, an argument also identified by Schouten and McAlexander (1995) who have identified similar psychological advantages of a cleansing nature to motorcycle riders with one participant stating that his children are already waiting for him when they hear the Harley-Davidson turn into the street and they know that their father will be in a good mood. This level of catharsis is achieved both through the solitary aspect of riding a motorcycle and when riding in a group. Due to the limited space and communication ability, one is always alone on the motorcycle and the exterior has less influence on the personal sanctuary and state of catharsis.

Whilst the catharsis is a deeply personal and psychological outcome of the riding experience it can only be anticipated at the beginning of the purchasing process as there has been no actual experience and elements of fear or dislike of the product can set in shortly after the purchase.

Whilst psychological elements play a role within the decision-making process it is clear that exterior forces influence consumption in a less subtle manner thus adding social and cultural aspects to the decision-making process. As previously outlined,

human actions are highly related to social aspects and the understanding of the community. Both social aspects and culture can be compared to one another, especially when looking at the desire to deepen participation. Social pressures can enhance or hinder participation forcing the participant to either invest more financial assets and time into the community or push one away from the said community (Holt & Thompson, 2004). However, cultural impacts can adapt the original decision and investment more strongly than social pressures. Through images created by the mass media, middle-aged men, especially, are impacted by the creation of an ideal version of themselves. It is the desire to appear to be free and to create a strong cowboy image fighting against conformity. This particular cultural aspect can be related to a variety of reasons, however, predominantly it is the change of culture in itself. Men feel more threatened in their breadwinner position as women gain more independence and jobs become less stable and more routinized (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Through the impact of such changes, decisions for frivolous consumption can be compared to 'flight' rather than 'fight', hedonic consumption offering an escape route into a private sanctuary.

2.3 How do these factors impact their attitudes towards their personal and household financial risk?

Psychological, sociological, and cultural elements all shape decision-making processes in a manner that either increases the likelihood of a purchase or prevents it from occurring. However, it is important to understand how these forces interact when it comes down to both personal and household finance risks. Modern media introduces and reiterates images of the ideal man, who is risk-seeking, adventurous but at the same time caring (Holt & Thompson, 2004). An imagination which causes a dissonance in male consumer mentality towards risk. Through this increased conflict between what is imagined of an ideal man and the current life situation, a male consumer can be more driven towards high-risk leisure activities in order to fulfil this image for him personally (Holt & Thompson, 2004). This does not automatically mean that it is being created to look more appealing to others but rather leads to a satisfaction of himself and his current life situation. Multiple factors will come into play to motivate the average male to attempt to exceed averageness and seek high-

risk adventures to introduce a new form of freedom and deliberation of his former self. Various authors have researched a variety of leisure activities of a risk-seeking nature; mountain climbing (Deighton, 1992), white-water rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993) skydiving (Celsi et al., 1993), motorcycling (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), race car driving (Holt & Thompson, 2004). All of these approach risk from slightly different angles but agree on the notion that risk-seeking activities create a form of sanctuary from daily routinized struggles.

Contributing factors are also created from the way risk is perceived, not through mass media but rather through logical thoughts. The creation of an evaluation of affection leads to a term that is known as affect heuristic in which the consumer relies on emotional affection to evaluate a product attempts to understand both positive and negative outcomes (Slovic et al., 2007). This form of analysis relies on all three aforementioned aspects as the consumer evaluates it not solely from a psychological standpoint but also from the social and cultural approaches which have shaped his beliefs and understanding over time. Affect heuristics can both hinder or enhance desire for consumption which has a significant impact on the perception of risk as an outcome depending on whether affection towards consumption is present or not (Slovic et al., 2007). Risk, both financial and personal, often have a limited impact on hindering consumption if appreciation for the product is present (Finucane et al., 2000). This especially comes into play when looking at motorcycle consumption and other high-risk leisure activities examined due to the fact that if a possible consumer does not like this specific leisure activity in the first instance consumption would not take place.

2.3.1 Risk Perception/ Gender & Domain Specific Risk Perception

Risk perception is a key element within decision-making as the decision maker evaluates the benefits combined with the risks leading to what is known as the expected utility function (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) if the risk outweighs the utility of a purchase or investment it would not take place. However, what is important to note is that, according to current literature, risk perception can be influenced through other elements and can and should be seen as a domain-specific item, which includes but is not limited to financial, health/safety, recreational, ethics, and social domains (Weber et al, 2002). According to the research conducted by Weber et al. (2002) the

decision maker is strongly influenced by several factors, these include the “individual, gender, and content domain differences in apparent risk taking” (p282). Within their research Weber et al. (2002) establish that gender specifically outlines the main difference in risk perception and the willingness to take risks. Throughout this research male participants responded more strongly to a willingness to take risk, which is supported by Hernández-Nicolás et al. (2019). As it has been identified risk perception does not only vary amongst genders but is also situationally bound where an individual makes their own personal decision, thus outlining a varied risk perception and understanding. However, it has also been argued that decision makers are naturally risk-averse in their “pure” attitude to risk and only through a discrepancy of risk is a risk-taking decision taken (Yates and Stone, 1992, Weber et al., 2002). Risk takers do not indicate a stronger preference for risk but rather create an overly optimistic perception of risk (Cooper et al., 1988; Weber et al., 2002), through which a personal understanding is created by being able to control the risks at hand through skill and handling of information (March and Shapira, 1987; Weber et al., 2002). Through the perception of controllability and manageability, whether realistic or illusory, the risk is impacted in a manner that makes it appear less precarious and therefore more sensible for the decision maker to take. As has been outlined previously situational risk perception impacts the decision maker by either creating a more risk-seeking or more risk-averse attitude (Schwartz & Hasnain, 2001).

2.3.1.1 Involved Risks (Household and Personal Risks)

The element of risk and the perception of risk hold significant positions within the proposed research. Motorcycling can be considered as a high-risk leisure activity, according to Road Safety Scotland whilst motorcycles make up only 1% of traffic on the road but they account for 13% of fatalities. If severe injuries are included in these figures then this number increases to over 30% (Road Safety Scotland, 2018), with excessive speed being the most dominant reason for an accident with a subsequent loss of control. Motorcycling and Harley-Davidson offers two components of significant value to the research, financial risk and a high-risk leisure activity which may have a significant impact on one's health. Financial risk is apparent due to the cost involved in the purchase of a Harley-Davidson product, ranging between suggested retail prices of \$7.499 and \$39.349 (Harley-Davidson, 2015) and the high depreciation of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle over time. A Harley-Davidson Electra Glide, one of the best-selling motorcycles, sold in 2015 for \$26.990 with a trade-in

value of \$17,600 one year later, and that is in excellent condition with limited running time and close to no flaws (Harley-Davidson, 2015; Kelly Blue Book, 2016). This shows a significant financial risk in the purchasing behaviour of consumers. Furthermore, risks are not limited to financial risk, as motorcycling offers a high-risk leisure as there are elements involved which may be harmful to the consumer. The risk of accidents may be reduced for Harley-Davidson consumers in comparison to lightweight sports bikes, with accident rates being the lowest of all categories for cruiser motorcycles with a death rate of 5.7 deaths per 10,000 registered cruiser motorcycles in comparison to 10.7 deaths per 10,000 registered sports motorcycles (Consumer Reports, 2007). Whilst it may be a reduced risk it is still significant and has to be considered within the development of a suitable framework.

2.3.1.2 Affect Heuristics & Personal Risk Dissonance

Affect heuristics outlines an important aspect of behavioural economics which is transferable to consumer behavioural analysis. It operates in the human decision-making process through a combination of personal understandings and beliefs which are drawn from a combination of three parts, psychological, social, and cultural. Each has a role in the decision-making process of consumption and they ultimately drive or obstruct consumption depending on one's personal beliefs and understanding. Whilst it is a highly personal process, external factors are not to be excluded as cultural and social interactions shape one's beliefs. In particular, the focus will lie on the financial or personal risk perceived by the individual.

The perception of risk is closely linked to affection towards a product, which will appear at first sight and mostly subconsciously (Slovic et al., 2002; Slovic et al., 2007), and should be seen as integral component of the machinery of reason (Slovic et al., 2002; Slovic et al. 2007). It has been argued that consumers do not just justify their purchase through thought but also through an expression of feeling and emotions (Alhakami & Slovic, 1994). According to Zajonc (1980, p155) this results in purchases based on emotions as "we buy cars we "like", choose the jobs and houses we find "attractive", and then justify these choices by various reasons..." Emotions do not have just influence the perception and motivation towards purchasing specific products but also the perceptions of risk and benefits resulting from the decision-making process based around the purchasing behaviour. The findings of Alhakami and Slovic (1994) showed that if an activity, such as motorcycling, is liked then the

perceived risk will be directly influenced by being judged as low and the resulting benefits as high. The same can be said in return as risks are being exaggerated and the possible benefits are perceived as low (Alhakami & Slovic, 1994).

It has been argued that if “that risk was low for some technology should lead to more positive overall affect that would, in turn, increase perceived benefit” (Finucane et al., 2000; Slovic et al., 2007, p1343). As a logical consequence of that argument Harley-Davidson consumers might evaluate the perception of risk/benefits through comparisons. As outlined previously Harley-Davidson cruisers death rate are nearly halved in comparison to other speed bikes, therefore the benefits of a Harley-Davidson is high and ultimately the risk must be low, as seen in the findings of Finucane et al. (2000).

2.3.1.3 Social Spending to reach Satisfaction

It is the perception of money that will also come into play in order to be able to understand the perception of the purchase of a Harley-Davidson. As previously mentioned, the structure of the Harley-Davidson experience is heavily based on the number of years of participation but also related to the participation in events and mileage ridden on the Harley-Davidson. This can be related back to the argument established by Tully et al. (2015) that spending is increased when it is related to an experience instead of an object and also that the experiential spending is perceived as more self-defining than material purchases (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). This specific argument is also obtained prior to the research of Tully et al. (2015), in which Dunn et al. (2011) outline a similar approach to spending behaviour. However, it is also noted that spending on others increases the happiness of oneself, irrelevant of financial status and that “spending money on a friend or romantic partner also provides an opportunity for positive self-presentation, which has been shown to produce benefits for mood” (Dunn et al., 2011, p 118; Dunn et al., 2007). In terms of social spending behaviour and a subsequent connection between social spending and risk perception, risk may be perceived as less significant when spending in relation to a communal target.

2.3.1.4 Risk Seeking Attitude and Competitiveness within a Subcultural Context

These elements can be seen as a combination of psychological, cultural and social aspects which impact the desire for thrill-seeking adventures in a community that

would otherwise be closed off. A further driving force that attracts male consumers to subcultures is a sense of competitiveness that generates a motivation for high-risk leisure. Such motivations can also inhibit men from committing to what are perceived as mature sports such as golf or tennis (Holt & Thompson, 2004).

Competitiveness is very significant in relation to activities an individual has not previously participated in, as they are lacking the ability to compete amongst their peers thus feeling intimidated by it. As a participant who is an eager race car driver in Holt and Thompson's research (2004) stated he "doesn't like to do something unless [he] can do it really well" (p430), other leisure activities represent the struggle of never catching the opponent. Through such a statement psychological reasoning and awareness is generated. It is important for the individual to be seen as a strong and competitive member of the subculture, in this case, car racing. However, the interviewee also outlines that there is a limit to his risk-taking and competitive side as he does not push his abilities to the maximum when racing against a much younger racer and showing awareness for his life situation and what is at stake if he gets injured. An interplay between risk seeking and avoiding reckless behaviour whilst doing it can be identified, as in the previous comparison of cruiser motorcycles being risky, but less risky than sporting motorcycles. It is a compromise used to make one side of the spectrum appear more sensible than the other. The participant also outlines his reasoning and indicates that he is not alone in his mentality for racing but not racing fearlessly, as being a husband, father, and dentist leaves him with responsibilities that are more important than winning. His justification is as followed "I've got a wife and kids and a bunch of patients depend on me, and I better be back to the office on Monday. So, it is not 10/10ths, its 9/10ths racing, and I'm racing with a bunch of other guys that are racing 9/10ths" (Holt & Thompson. 2004, p430). Here, his sentiments and reasoning encompass all the elements of personal and financial household risks.

2.3.1.5 Limiting Expenses & Household Risks

The focus of the participant is also on household risk by attempting to limit the financial investments required to participate in his hobby of car racing. As he is being quoted saying that he purposely chose to drive "inexpensive cars" and not participate in higher investments by buying race cars which can cost up to \$500,000. This also limits the subsequent costs in case of damages to the vehicle because "if [he] bend[s] a

part [he] can call somebody and say, "Send me one (a particular part" (Holt & Thompson, 2004, p430) whereas his competitors with more expensive vehicles would need a part specifically made to order (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Whilst it might appear a subtle difference these costs can accumulate to a significant amount over a period of time, thus impacting other purchases which could have been made on a less hedonic level. Through this awareness, the participant actively attempts to limit the household risks without having to give up his hobby.

At this stage, it needs to be argued that Harley-Davidson consumers do not tend to select this option of reducing financial risks to a minimum amount, as otherwise, they would select a different brand that offers a similar style of motorcycle with a lower price tag. Whilst it might appear a less life-endangering item it will place a higher burden on the household and put future financial stability at risk. This especially comes into play when focusing on future purchases such as modifications to the motorcycle, a common practice in the subculture of Harley-Davidson, or purchases to be dressed suitably on the motorcycle for the purpose of appearance or safety reasons.

However, an important aspect has to be considered in order to create an appropriate discussion for the topic at hand. This aspect is that the money is not lost. Whilst it does not appear on a bank account it does not automatically mean that it is not present, the funds simply have been transferred into a material object. If the situation urgently requires it, the motorcycle can be used to return some of the original investment, it cannot be all based on depreciation factors that come into play with vehicle usage. In the eyes of the consumer, the financial risk is limited and does not appear to be a factor, to a certain extent as extreme consumption is not the target as it is in Holt and Thompson's example (2004). Monetary assets can be reclaimed and liquidated through selling the item, therefore financial household risks are limited (Holt & Thompson, 2004).

2.3.1.6 Personal Risks

The financial risk is only a starting point for a series of risks, in particular participation in high-risk leisure activities. As stated, the risk of riding a cruiser motorcycle does not diminish the risk factor as a whole but limits it to a certain extent. Participants in such high-risk leisure activities possess a thrill-seeking attitude that is looking to be satisfied. It outlines a compromise can be made between several parties including the

spouse or the thought of endangering the future of their children, but most importantly it has to be a compromise that is satisfactory to the consumer himself. Otherwise, the desire for thrills will not be fulfilled in a satisfactory manner and might turn to more extreme ways of thrill-seeking.

2.3.1.8 Thrill-seeking to escape

Authors discuss a variety of general area such as, mountain climbing (Deighton, 1992), white-water rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993) skydiving (Celsi et al., 1993), motorcycling (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995), and race car driving (Holt & Thompson, 2004) all with similar pattern of influences for participation in a thrill-seeking environment which relies on a strong subculture and the desire of the participants to break free from their day-to-day struggles and worries. However, these studies miss the connection to a specific brand in the thrill-seeking environment. Participating in high-risk leisure activity is at the centre of discussion and seen as the key element and the various brands which supply the products are not discussed at a significant level. The only research which touches on brand usage is actually conducted within the motorcycling subculture, Schouten and McAlexander (1993) and Schembri (2009). This indicates that specific brand usage is more relevant to specific areas. However, the focus of the research was from a cultural perspective and through an ethnographic perspective and did not closely examine brand usage issues.

2.3.1.9 Subcultural Attraction/ Playmates

Through the formation of Chapters, Harley consumers are able to identify themselves with a certain grouping. Chapter is a term used by outlaw biker groups, such as the Hells Angels. This terminology is continued throughout company supported groupings such as the Harley Davidson Owner Groups which are have Chapters in each city where a dealership can be found. However, it is not just limited to either outlaw groupings or HOGs, as the Owner Group is called. Harley-Davidson riders form groupings according to their character and identity. s Schouten and McAlexander (1995, p48) cite American biker groups such as Dykes on Bikes which “serves the needs of lesbian motorcycle enthusiasts” or the group of the “Trinity Road Riders” which identifies itself with the Christian faith and “at rallies on Sunday mornings they can be seen huddling around a motorcycle radio to catch a religious broadcast” (Schouten & Mc Alexander, 1995, p48). This combination of having a subculture within a subculture allows Harley-Davidson consumers to identify themselves not just with their identity but also with the brand of Harley-Davidson from a social point of

view. Whilst Christian Harley groups are participating in a subculture, others refer to Harley-Davidson as a form of religion itself (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) and even the manager of the HOG events team, Joe Dowd, offers a controversial comparison of the Harley mystique, “we say we are going, and they follow - just because they believe in Harley. It is scary. Kind of like Hitler.” (Fournier, 2000, p4).

2.3.1.10 The Real Biker- Participation for Acceptance

Whilst all united under the Harley-Davidson brand there is friction between groups. This is based on the experiences and level of identification with individual groupings. Celsi et al. (1993) mention the importance of experience within a community and the resulting hierarchy of respect. Experience can be related to two factors (1) number of years owning a Harley-Davidson motorcycle and/or (2) number of miles ridden the Harley-Davidson (Celsi et al., 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). The former is important as frictions between the “real bikers” and those insultingly referred to “poseurs” is based on the number of years with Harley motorcycles, especially prior to the Harley-Davidson reformation and the distancing from outlaw gangs. The latter can also be extended to participation in well-known rallies such as Daytona Beach Bike Week or Sturgis or more European focused rallies such as European Bike Week at Lake Faak.

Since the mid-1980s Harley-Davidson made a significant change in order to alter the image of the company, which was too closely linked to outlaw groups and unpleasant representations of the company. Since that time Harley-Davidson transformed from its blue-collar outlaw group base to a universally appreciated motorcycle manufacturer, by appealing to RUBies (for reference see p41) or white-collar consumers. This change was not welcomed with the loyal consumer of previous years, an informant to Schouten and McAlexander (1995) stated that Harley Davidson had “sold out for the mighty dollar” (p58) and another fearing that someone would be hurt by one of the original Harley customers.

However, despite these perceived conflicts within the subculture of Harley-Davidson it is the appreciation and the purchase itself that unites the Harley consumers and forms a bond in which “a welder can sit down with a bank president and speak the same language” (Herzog, 1993).

These and most other authors focus on the US market, specifically, in regard to the work of Schouten and McAlexander, it is important to extend their findings to non-

American areas and how the image of Americanism is represented and understood overseas. Specific elements of American patriotism, which are frequently stitched into the apparel of rider and motorcycle. The most common sign that can be found within the Harley-Davidson subculture is the representation of the eagle with its spread wings as a symbol “broadly representative of flight and American political freedom (as well as predation and power, which are relevant to a different core value. i.e., machismo), pervades Harley-Davidson branding as a symbol of liberation” (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995, p51). In addition to this unique representation of American symbolism, it is also important to note the perception the subculture creates for themselves by referring to their motorcycles as iron horses and therefore generating an image of reintroducing a life of the western frontier or cowboy persona (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). It is essential to outline the differences within the American and non-American markets and to understand the motivations of an investment in an American icon (Esch et al., 2012) outside. Leonard (1993) describes the phenomenon:

“I don’t think it’s too cynical to suggest that Harley marketing abroad relies on the rest of the world’s fetish for old Americana” (Maz, 1985)

The key interest of this research is the connection between the consumer and the brand, how Harley-Davidson is attracting consumers to purchase access to the high-risk leisure activity of motorcycling. Similar affection can be determined in several other product groups, three prominent examples are laptops (MacBook vs others), mobile phones (Android phones vs iPhones), and cars (selection of the most favoured brand). The influences of personal and household risk are most apparent in the area of motorcycling where Harley-Davidson represents the ideal brand to determine the consumer decision-making process of what is known as a halo effect.

2.3.3 Review of discussion

It is evident that the risk of both personal risk and household risk impact the decision-making process in several ways. Personal risk represented through the risk of life-threatening or even fatal injuries that come with motorcycling but also the financial risk which may impact household activities and purchases. The combination of both elements outlines the need for the affect heuristics impacting on one's consumption. Without such a psychological element a purchase of this sort would not occur as it

would be irrational and dangerous to commit to a risky hedonic product. Whilst the psychological element outlines an interesting argument, it simply cannot be enough in order to complete a high-risk purchase. Other elements need to be in place which impact and drive consumption in order to generate the necessary financial commitment and desire.

It is the understanding of the risks that are important from a consumer's perspective, as Holt and Thompson (2004) found there is a risk-seeking mentality at hand. However, it is important for the participants in such leisure activities to limit the chance of a negative outcome. This is achieved by several means; either not to "go for it" or through limiting financial investments. Harley-Davidson consumers, however, are outlining the presence of an influencing force that moves them closer to high-end products, and therefore require more financial investments than if they would select a different brand. Social-cultural and psychological factors are interlinking at several stages that generate a desire for this specific brand rather than less expensive options. This is a moment where the affect heuristics heavily influence the decision-making process and support the craving of Harley-Davidson motorcycles and let the consumer assess the risks as less significant as that might be. Through such a process the purchase intention is enhanced when it should really be hindered.

Additionally, it has to be argued that outside influences can be significant from a cultural perspective, as it has been outlined in Holt and Thompson's (2004) work in which cultural changes impact on the perception of masculinity and force male consumers to adapt to these socioeconomic changes in an extreme and risk-seeking manner. Masculinity is impacted through other means which drive more risk-seeking behaviour such as the representation of the ideal man through mass media representation (Celsi et al, 1993; Holt & Thompson, 2004). Psychological and cultural influences are at play which drive consumption in a subtle manner. However, social impact are working alongside the aforementioned internal and external impacting elements in a less subtle way, especially when looking at masculine competitiveness and the desire to show achievement in multiple ways such as the outlined example of Holt and Thompson's (2004) interviewee. Furthermore, it is also argued that social influences are in place in the subculture of motorcycling and predominantly within the Harley-Davidson community. It is a form of identity seeking that is offered through participation in very diverse groups all under the roof of the Harley-Davidson brand. This form of identity seeking offers an appealing pathway to escape from routinized

daily activities and offer a justification to the consumer for participation in a risk leisure activity of motorcycling whilst excusing an increased household risk.

It can be argued that these aforementioned psychological, social, and cultural factors need to be regarded as motivators for risk-seeking activities among male consumers. Through the combination of these forces, male consumers feel the urge for deliberation to be satisfied and fulfil it in a manner that is appropriate for their life situation and with an imperfect ability to assess risk.

2.4 What is the process by which each of the key economic, psycho-social, and developmental factors influence the decision?

As well as psychological, social, and cultural elements, economic, psycho-social, and developmental factors all impact on consumer behavioural decision making. Economic factors involve the evaluation of specific products and reasons for their consumption, they may include assumptions about one's satisfaction with the purchase. However, according to Tully et al. (2015), it would be an overestimation of the consumer's ability to foresee future benefits and product satisfaction, therefore, such assumptions lead to misinterpretation by the consumer. Continuous re-evaluation of one's financial abilities has to be in place in order to be able to understand one's financial possibilities especially when it comes to more frivolous spending behaviour related to high risk.

Psychosocial factors are undeniable in decision making, these influences range from social interactions to what is perceived as good, appropriate, or even fun. Additionally, there is an intra-personal debate occurring about the value of a hedonic product and if it deserves the financial investment, a debate not in place for utilitarian consumption. This justification process and search for an excuse to purchase is in place for consumption which exceeds the basic requirements, which may be relevant for the purchase of more luxurious bread or make-up (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009) but is particularly present when looking at high risk and high investment stakes.

However, notions of influence can also come from developmental features that influence more frivolous hedonic spending behaviour. These features are based on nostalgic emotions, reiterating the importance of emotions within consumer

behaviour. Nostalgia is an element which must not be underestimated and is explored in detail below in section 2.4.3.1.

2.4.1 Economic

There are many influences that consumers face when making both small and large financial decisions. Again, it is important to outline the main differences in the decision-making processes for utilitarian and hedonic consumption. A process of reasoning occurs with hedonic consumption as there is a great need for explanation and justification, whereas utilitarian products, such as food or medication clearly state their own necessity. Consumption can be heavily influenced by the creation of an intra-personal discussion of the need for a hedonic product (Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2012; Khan & Dhar, 2006; Kivetz & Simmons, 2002a; O'Curry & Strahilevitz, 2001; Okada, 2005; Sela et al., 2009; Kivetz & Zheng, 2017). This intrapersonal argument is generated by two aspects working against each other and making it more challenging to consume hedonic products. On one hand is the desire for indulgence and on the other, is the need for prudence (Kivetz & Zheng, 2016, p60). Spending which could have otherwise been utilised for more basic requirements may appear in the future and create financial stability in one's life (Kivetz & Zheng, 2017). Hedonic consumption is difficult to justify, in comparison to utilitarian consumption, as outlined in various academic fields such as consumer psychology, economics, philosophy, political science, and sociology (Kivetz & Zheng, 2017).

These influences range from the utilitarian or hedonic nature of the product to the background music that playing in a store (Lacher & Mizerski, 1994). All participate to create a stronger desire for purchases when faced with luxurious options which form a sense of delight rather than a mere satisfaction (Chitturi et al., 2008; Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009). There is a differentiation between new and old luxury, under new luxury, smaller items are regarded as luxurious such as high-quality bath salts, make-up and even sandwiches which are marketed as luxurious and superior. They have their own placement and name within shopping areas such as Tesco Finest or Morrison's Signature products and cover virtually every product category and tempt the consumer to trade up to a category of goods known as new luxury (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009). Conventional luxury products such as diamonds, furs and expensive cars are termed old luxury (Silverstein & Fiske, 2003; Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009).

2.4.1.1 Economic Decision Making for Social Consumption

Economic decision making is highly related to the social surroundings the consumer finds him/herself in. Through an inherent desire to belong to a specific social group, consumption can be increased to find acceptance within such groups in ways “that endear them to the group and help them avoid social rejection” (Lee & Shrum, 2012, Ward & Dahl, 2014, p604). Although it has been argued by Ward and Dahl (2014) that not all consumers are faced with the social dilemma of rejection and the leading increase of consumption as a form of compensation, especially in relation to luxury brands. Only if the consumer values a brand and relates the brand to their ideal self-concept can affiliative behaviours be identified after rejection by a brand, thus, increasing consumption allows the consumer to compensate for previously experienced brand rejection. Social rejection and feelings of inferiority are influences that shape and adapt to current situations. Although it has been argued that rejection only comes into play when it is repeated over time and not only based on a singular event in the relationship with the brand. Unless the rejection is the only contact the consumer had with the brand which would have a higher detrimental value (Ward & Dahl, 2014). Injured pride and lowered self-esteem can provide motivation for personal spending, where brands, especially luxury brands, and pride are systematically interrelated (McFerran et al., 2014). Research in the field of power consumption conducted by Gao et al. (2016) outlined that consumption is motivated by status and that power distance belief (PDB) consumption is in relation to another person’s status, as high-PDB consumers tend to adjust their consumption in relation to their environment. This results in a difference in consumption, in which high-PDB consumers are more likely to engage in status consumption when others’ status is not superior (either similar or inferior). However, interestingly it has been argued by Gao et al. (2016) that, once another person’s status is superior, high-PDB consumers are less likely to compensate by engaging in status consumption. However, this argument is based on the level of power distant belief which is an individual belief. It does not falsify the previous argument but simply adds a new form of understanding of individual perception to the argument of status acquisition and satisfaction to consumption.

However, as outlined previously satisfaction is mostly achieved through the pathways money is being utilised. This can either be utilitarian or hedonic spending, but also for whom spending is being conducted. This outlines a significant argument for the research, as the topic at hand focusses on what can be referred to as mostly personal

spending in an attempt to achieve satisfaction through that manner. However, it has been argued that “money buys happiness, but it buys less than most people think” (Frey & Stutzer, 2000; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2002; Aknin et al. 2009; Dunn et al, 2010, p115). As discussed previously in terms of social spending (section 2.3.2.3), Dunn et al. (2010) identified that hedonic consumption achieves the highest levels of happiness when consumption is not done on oneself but rather spent on others as spending on others.

Additionally, as discussed, experiential consumption generates long-term happiness for individuals (Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003). However, Tully et al. are not as confident in giving consumers the benefit of the doubt that they can foresee not only the durability of the purchase but also the happiness that they will create over a prolonged period of time. They, therefore, state that consumers will focus more on material goods which will be more physically persistent over time. However, when looking at hedonic purchases which offer both an experiential aspect and a long-lasting material good the consumption should be defined in the order of perception of material goods first and the experiential side second. According to Tully et al. (2015), material goods are also preferred by people who perceive themselves under financial constraint. Through such an argument the mystique that Harley-Davidson has on all social classes can be explained.

2.4.1.1 Spending as a Reward

As Kivetz and Zheng (2006) argued, hedonic consumption is heavily influenced by consumers who believe they have earned a reward or through excellent completion of a task and are therefore more likely to select a hedonic product over utilitarian consumption. The need to understand hedonic consumption with or without risks in contrast to utilitarian ones is of great interest within several fields to further understand this particular area of consumer behaviour. Justification is not only sought by the consumer but also in academic work.

It can be argued that the consumer creates a sense of achievement through frivolous consumption and compares his/her current situation with previous choices and behaviour in order to establish what appropriate consumption is on an intra-personal level based on the notion of rewards and the “the right to indulge”, as one of several mechanisms at work during hedonic consumption (Kivetz & Simonson, 2002b; Khan & Dhar, 2006; Kivetz & Zhen, 2006; Mukhopadhyay & Johar, 2009; Kivetz & Zheng, 2017) .

2.4.1.2 Desire to Re-Experience

Additionally, it can be argued that hedonic consumption is driven by a desire to re-experience (Lacher & Mizerski, 1994). Lacher and Mizerski researched hedonic consumption of music and identified that music consumption can be caused by a variety of factors such as emotional stimulation cognitive stimulation, and situational factors (Berlyne, 1971, 1974; Havlena & Holbrook, 1986; Holbrook & Anand, 1990; Meyer, 1956, Sloboda, 1985; Yingling, 1962, Lacher & Mizerski, 1994).

As experience becomes more relevant it is important to note that not just the experience itself is a key component of consumption but also the desire to re-experience (Lacher & Mizerski, 1994). Their approach to music differs from material good purchase as other elements play a role and importantly access to music differs as it is more openly accessible, through radio or other services, to the public. However, the need to re-experience can be translated on a universal scale. Material goods have to be possessed in order to be re-experienced. However, the experiential aspect holds a key component to the purchasing behaviour of hedonic consumption. As outlined earlier, experiential aspects involve facets of emotions, personal feelings and experiences (Schwarz, 2004; Esch et al., 2012, p76), however, those experienced emotions have to be shared within an accepting community. Whilst Harley-Davidson provides material goods it further allows the consumer to access the experiential side of the product through usage over a long period of time.

However, it is important to note that music differs vastly from other types of hedonic consumption as it bears the unusual feature that it can be consumed freely through various channels such as radio and television, in nightclubs, or at a friend's house party (Lacher & Mizerski, 1994), allowing the consumer to experience the product without actually having to purchase it. Aesthetic products, such as literature, visual arts, and music are challenging for hedonic research as they are enjoyed for themselves without any tangible benefits gained through consumption (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, Lacher & Mizerski, 1994). Trilio (1976) stated that "whilst mathematical formulas developed under information theory can be used to measure information, they cannot be used to measure affect" (Lacher & Mizerski, 1994, p13), outlining that empirical evidence cannot be obtained on something as intangible as personal affect.

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) discussed a comparison between an information-processing model of consumer behaviour to a hedonic consumption model, stating

that the majority of consumer behaviour is explanatory by conventional research, however it neglects an important part of the consumption experiences which can be described as a multisensory experience, fantasy and emotive aspects (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Lacher & Mizerski, 1994, p367). Through the comparison created by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) external and internal responses are being described, multisensory experiences can be described as external influencing factors that in turn, cause internal fantasies or imagery as part of the “experience” (p92). Berlyne (1971) states that predominantly consumer research assumes “that these experiences to be afferent (e.g. a product taste test), the hedonic perspective also posits efferent experiences of multisensory impulses as an important form of consumer response” (Berlyne, 1971; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, p92).

2.4.2 Psycho-Social

The psycho-social element is key in facilitating decision making by either accelerating or hindering purchases. This element is highly focused on masculinity and the representation and creation of an idealistic masculine representation. Through consumption, male consumers are able to relieve themselves from the social pressures of bureaucratic conformity. This is especially related to their position within society. As Ehrenreich (1983) argued, men are taking flight from commitment and utilising “commodities to act out their emancipatory fantasies” (Ehrenreich, 1983; Holt & Thompson, 2004, p425). Men are placed in a position of the breadwinner of the family and rebel against symbols related to their professional occupation and family.

Researchers have identified several high-risk leisure activities that can be related to motorcycling, such as skydiving (Celsi et al, 1993); race car driving (Holt & Thompson, 2004), and mountain climbing (Deighton, 1992). However, these activities are single sport events conducted within a social environment pre- and post-participation, with participation aspects being at the centre of the social gathering. This ultimately raises the question that men are taking flight into the solidarity of the key stages of the hobby. The social aspects become a side effect of participation but are not as sought after as momentary solidarity and the creation of a personal sanctuary.

2.4.3 Developmental

As mentioned, there are significant developmental forces in place which are influential factors for more frivolous and masculine consumption. The gained independence of women, by entering the workforce has caused major socioeconomic changes and in turn has created a momentum of emasculation in this new environment (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Causing male consumers to more irrational behaviour in order to symbolically reaffirm their status as real men through compensatory consumption (Holt & Thompson). The threatened male finds himself in an environment in which standardisation and bureaucracies are taking control of day-to-day activities and he regards himself as a “mere earnings mechanism” (Ehrenreich, 1983, p6; Holt & Thompson, 2004). Compensatory consumption comes into place when men attempt to seek relief from these newly formed pressures of society of the breadwinner position.

2.4.3.1 Nostalgia

Two motivators can be found in nostalgia and economic development. Nostalgia and economic changes go hand in hand in order to create a fulfilment of past experiences and desires. Through a richer society urges can be created of thoughts of the past and ways to relive moments of the past can be a strong motivator to disregard financial and personal risks to a level that the personal meaning of the product is most important. As Levy (1959) argued, consumption does not solely take place for the abilities of the product but rather for what that product means to the consumer. Thus, by the combination of a strengthened financial position and longing for periods of the past, consumption can be increased.

Nostalgia features “the self as the protagonist interacting with close others in the context of momentous life events” (Wildschut et al., 2006; Zhou et al., 2011, p39). Through those life events, a sentimental longing is generated for the past. Nostalgia can and should be seen as an important attribute to the appeal of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. The company’s famous and well known “Bar and Shield” logo has hardly been changed since 1910 and has been the officially registered trademark since 1911 (Harley-Davidson, 2016). Historically, only the strongest brands are able to rely on logo recognition and generate an emotional understanding of the company by not adapting their emblem in the long-term. Famous examples include Mercedes-Benz, Nivea, Coco-Cola and Pepsi. A common ground for these brands is that all age groups have some form of experience with the brand, it is unimportant whether it was a poster in the bedroom as a child or a refreshment on a hot summer day. The recognisability

of these brands, including Harley-Davidson, can be perceived as strong and even iconic (Esch et al., 2012). The fascination is still embedded within the memories and Harley-Davidson utilises the affection it has generated throughout its own history. Whilst technological advances have been implemented in the manufacturing of the 2-cylinder engines and other parts, the design, on the other hand, has not been changed dramatically since the 1930s, to better facilitate the creation of nostalgic emotions.

Nostalgic emotions can impact the way a person responds in a variety of manners. As it has been proven by Huang et al. (2016) nostalgic thoughts can have an effect on how humans behave when faced with prolonged waiting times. The willingness to accept prolonged periods of waiting is increased once nostalgic memories have been brought to the purchaser's attention.

Furthermore, nostalgic memories can also impact on purchasing behaviour and create a biased product evaluation based on nostalgic memories from childhood (Connell et al., 2014). The focus of the research by Connell et al. (2014) is on advertising and it analyses the perception of advertisements throughout a person's life as an influencing factor to consumption in later stages. However, Connell et al. (2014) do not address significant purchases of higher values. Harley-Davidson in Europe uses very little advertisement to generate a customer base and other elements, outside of advertising, may influence behaviour more strongly.

Zhou et al. (2011) looked at the impact of nostalgic emotions on charitable donations illustrating the influences of nostalgic memories to future preferences and the creation of a lifelong bias towards a certain product based on these memories. More closely related to the Harley-Davidson is Schindler and Holbrook (2003) who showed that popular styles during one's childhood can "influence the consumers lifelong preferences" (Schindler & Holbrook, 2003, p275) and linking it to age and gender for preference in the automotive market. They hypothesised that (1) "Nostalgic preference -- that is, a general age-related preference peak-- will occur in the automotive product category"(Schindler and Holbrook, 2003, p281) and (2) "Men will show a more distinct age-related preference peak in automobile preferences than will women" (Schindler & Holbrook, 2003, p 282). Both hypotheses (1) and (2) were supported through empirical evidence, that nostalgic preferences influence consumer behaviour especially in the automotive sector of which the motorcycle is a part. Furthermore, it also indicated that the nostalgic preferences of one's youth are stronger within men than women. The findings of Schindler and Holbrook (2003)

support the choice of this research to study a specified age group of males. Additionally, it provides a relevant reasoning to possible purchase influences that have driven the consumer consciously or subconsciously to purchasing a product similar to products of the participants' childhood experiences.

The German motorcycle magazine (Motorrad, 2016) identified a curious trend for retro or vintage products with modern benefits, the phenomenon of motorcycle nostalgia. It is not just the motorcycle which receives the attention of designers from various companies to give them a retro or vintage look but also the clothing and protection received similar attention. Products have been presented at the Intermot, one of the largest motorcycle fairs, which not just gives leather jackets a vintage look to make them appear used and old but also protection equipment such as helmets receive a vintage makeover. The looks are from different eras, some may be placed within the late 50s/early 60s whereas others use the 70s for inspiration. The trend to focus on such vintage designs corresponds to the previously discussed aspect of nostalgia as a factor within consumption in this particular market. Furthermore, the tendency to focus on those particular time periods additional confirms the focus of the research. Nostalgia influences consumers to purchase items arousing memories of their personal childhood, when linked products from the late 1950s to mid-1970s, this supports the age range of the research with male Harley-Davidson consumers of 40 to 60 years.

2.4.3.2 Economic Developments and Emotions of Inferiority

In Western culture an image is created which enhances more reckless behaviour and a break from conformity, advertisements and cinematic productions outline characteristics that are desirable. Celsi et al. (1993) state we are continually admonished to actively seek this life-endangering behaviour and just "go for it" (Celsi et al., 1993, p2). Culture plays another important role in influencing consumption and liberation from ones otherwise highly regulated life. Holt and Thompson (2004) support the notion of achieving an element of liberation through particular consumption and thus taking flight into less risk-averse groups and subcultures. It illustrates and represent a life away from hierarchies and organisational dependence and stands for a cowboy and western frontier life (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Through this deliberation of the confined world, those who participate in this unique subculture are taking flight from conformity. This may be a surprising argument, as the participants would like to be regarded as strong and independent by representing their

masculinity through the hedonic consumption of Harley-Davidson products. Socioeconomic changes have forced male members of society to express their threatened masculinity through other means. In specific sectors, jobs have become “less secure and more routinized” (Holt & Thompson, 2004, p 425) whilst women have gained more independence and thus threaten the breadwinner position of men. Through consumption of the masculine and dominant appearance of motorcycles men “experience a sense liberation and personal autonomy from constraints of polite society” (Holt & Thompson, 2004, p 426; Schouten & McAlexander, 1996). This personal autonomy can often be heard with motorcyclists enjoying Freedom and is also utilised by Harley-Davidson as a descriptive term for their products and the identity of the firm. Thus, strengthening the idea of a free man seeking freedom from bureaucracy and entrapment of the self in “polite society” as it described in literature.

The independence of women and threatened masculinity creates a collision between the American ideal of the self-made man generates. There is a conflict between the desire to achieve in the breadwinner role and the modern socioeconomic situations which have strongly contributed to the pervasive anxieties of manhood (Kimmel, 1996; Holt & Thompson, 2004). Through this conflict, a desire for flight and escape is generated in which assumptions can be made about a man’s working or family situation (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Holt & Thompson, 2004).

Through the purchase, an identity cover can be created with only members being able accurately guess the price tag of ones Harley by understanding the modification undertaken. Outsiders do not have that ability and can only create a generic price tag. This unique identity form can offer protection from an insight into one's bank account or work schedule. Though other purchases do not offer a similar anonymity, these purchases may include cars or houses, also referred to as old luxury (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009) . It is easier to judge a luxurious sports car and a villa in contrast to a small hatchback and a student flat. However, it is the enhanced masculine stigma that is desired through the consumption (Holt & Thompson, 2004) that comes with a Harley-Davidson rather than protection from the judgment of others.

It becomes more apparent that through the consumption, other aspects of one’s personal life are being compensated for (Holt & Thompson, 2004). Thus, whilst attempting to appear stronger and tougher which would signal a willingness to fight rather than flight, men attempt to compensate for anxieties based on socioeconomic

developments and choose flight rather than fight and take flight into a risk-appreciating surrounding.

Whilst having analysed the impact of consumption on men and their battle for masculinity within a pressured society (Holt & Thompson, 2004), it would be interesting to see what impact this would have on men who do not have the opportunity to indulge in masculine consumption in order to break out of the socioeconomic burdens and the impact their decision has on their consumption. From the examples used by Holt and Thompson (2004) it would seem necessary that all American men would need to ride or at least own a Harley-Davidson. However, as this is not true there must be a pathway for the Non-Harley-Davidson consumers to have a release valve through which they can escape the described pressures of modern society and experience their own personal autonomy by other means and measures.

2.4.4 Review of discussion

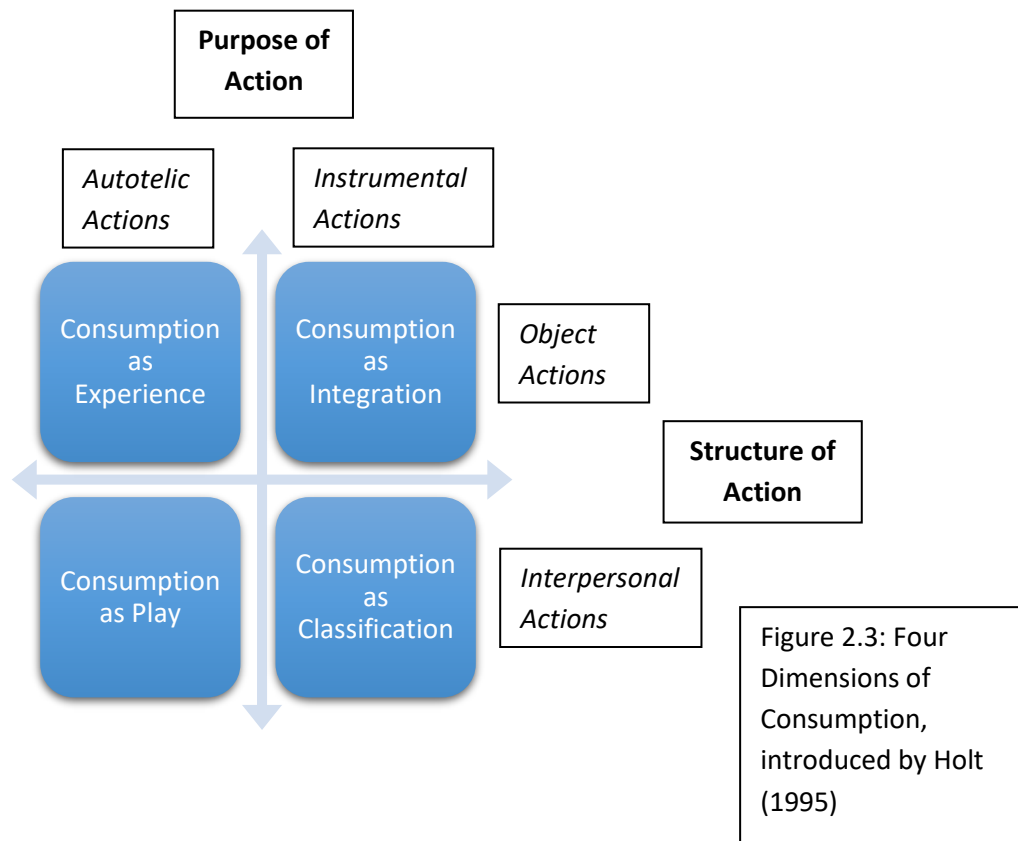
Hedonic consumption products are products of non-necessity and therefore undergo a more rigid reasoning process than utilitarian ones, with excuses or reasons for the purchase being sought. However, some of these reasons may lie beneath the covering aspects of affection or financial ability to conduct purchases of a frivolous nature. In this part, more specific reasons are used to demonstrate thought processes that may influence hedonic decision making. These reasons are varied and refer to three main aspects, economic, psycho-social, and developmental factors. Economic decision-making processes are often related to external aspects of one's life, with feelings of jealousy or indications of one's superiority having a significant impact on indulgence in more frivolous consumption. Furthermore, the manner in which money is spent is also important. This is not about hedonic versus utilitarian consumption, but rather personal consumption versus spending money on someone else under a hedonic premise. Additionally, it is relevant to discuss the nature of purchases of either experiential or material goods. Both involve different thought processes and are seen in different ways with different emotional outcomes for the consumer. However, it is important to note that a constant re-evaluation of one's economic ability will need to take place in order for such functions to occur.

Moreover, psycho-social elements are more influential within the realm of decision-making process for hedonic products and an intra-personal discussion of the need for a hedonic product consumption is created (O'Curry & Strahilevitz, 2001; Kivetz & Simmons, 2002a; Okada, 2005; Khan & Dhar, 2006; Sela et al., 2009; Dhar & Wertenbroch, 2012; Kivetz & Zheng, 2017). Hedonic consumption involves two forces working against each other, namely the desire for consumption on the one hand and prudence on the other (Kivetz & Zheng, 2017). Furthermore, it is the situational environment one finds oneself in at the moment of debating the purchase, where influences such as music are methods utilised to create a frivolous spending willingness within a consumer. Multisensory attributes are external factors used to create internal fantasies or to support positive imagination.

Imagination and fantasies are a base for the developmental case presented in this paper, as nostalgia uses reminiscent thoughts and desires for the recreation of memories of previous experiences. Nostalgic thoughts can be supported and finally be lived out now due to a strengthened economic position. In the world of motorcycling, there is a strong tendency to live out nostalgia and showing these intentions through purchases. It is the combination old and new that makes it more appealing, including both the design and the technology of motorcycles and clothing. The old and successful designs from yesteryear are kept whilst advanced technology is incorporated. Nostalgia can have an impact on several areas of our consumption, it can increase waiting times as shown in the research conducted by Huang et al. (2016) or it can indicate brand affection and loyalty based on previous experiences with a specific brand creating a bias based on the memories of one's childhood (Connell et al, 2014).

2.5 The Dimensions of Consumptions

The previous section introduced the fourth dimension of consumption, consumption as play (Holt, 1995). Furthermore, a clear distinction has to be made in the way consumption is organised. On the one hand, the structure of consumption and on the other hand, the purpose of consumption, as integrated into Figure 2.3 (Holbrook, 1994; Holt, 1995).



2.5.1 Consumption as Experience:

In accordance with Holt's model (1995) consumption as experience is an autotelic object consumption which offers direct engagement with the object and represents an end in itself. This means that consumption extends the knowledge of experiences to tangible objects and their embedding in a social world which the consumer understands through their own personal framework. This allows a necessary differentiation between a primary and secondary framework to occur. The primary framework outlines decision-making and understanding through everyday participation (Berger & Luckmann, 1967; Goffman, 1974; Holt, 1995). Whereas the secondary framework of consumption is only applied within social environments and

provide a more domain-specific understanding (Becker, 1982; Holt, 1995), these social worlds have a “shared definition of reality by structuring perceptions of the “way things are”” (Berger & Luckmann, 1967 in Holt, 1995, p3). The secondary framework allows the experiencing of objects through “a shared lens through which they can make sense of the situations, roles, actions, and objects” (Geertz, 1973 in Holt, 1995).

Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) discussed a comparison between an information-processing model of consumer behaviour to a hedonic consumption model, arguing that the majority of consumer behaviour is explained by conventional research. However, it neglects an important part of the consumption experiences, multisensory experience, the fantasy and emotive aspects (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Lacher & Mizerski, 1994, p367). Through the comparison created by Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) external and internal responses are described, multisensory experiences can be described as an external influencing factor but in turn, cause internal fantasies or imagery as part of the “experience” (p92). This aspect is supported by Berlyne (1971) stating that consumer research assumes “these experiences to be afferent (e.g. a product taste test), the hedonic perspective also posits efferent experiences of multisensory impulses as an important form of consumer response” (Berlyne, 1971; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982, p92).

2.5.1.1 Related to Harley-Davidson

Within a secondary framework of consumer experience consumption internal and external adaptations impact their personal perception and behaviour in the surroundings being entered. Harley-Davidson consumers tend to enter a new world in which their usual behavioural traits change in order to fit in. Schouten and McAlexander use the term “temporary self-transformation” to describe the sanctuary the Harley consumer enters and their adaptation to the environment (1995, p50).

2.5.2 Consumption as Integration

In contrast to consumption as experience as an autotelic action, consumption as integration is an “instrumental act pursued to facilitate the symbolic use of the object” (Holt, 1995, p6). Consumption as integration is a dual integration system: on the one hand it is the self-extending assimilation process with the object of consumption (Belk, 1988) and on the other it is the integration of oneself into the object suited environment through a process of reorientation of their personal self-concept (Solomon, 1983; Zerubavel, 1991; Holt, 1995).

2.5.2.1 Assimilation

From this perspective, it becomes apparent that a process of assimilation occurs, as the object becomes a constitutive element of their identity (Rosenberg, 1979). Assimilation practices are the advancement of the consumer from novice to expert consumer within an object orientated consumption environment (Holt, 1995). Different aspects of assimilation may occur; however, all are based on interaction with the object focused environment (Celsi et al., 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). The key element for a successful assimilation of consumption is the understanding of the environment and attempting to indicate these admirations accordingly, thus presenting the object selection to the outside world. This can be achieved by various means, such as clothing related to the object or even tattoos (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). It is an attempted behaviour in which the consumer not only needs to think like a participant but also needs to act accordingly (Holt, 1995). Assimilation is not the “why” consumers participate but more the “how” (Holt, 1995).

2.5.2.2 Producing

In order for this process of assimilation to fully occur a level of producing needs to be involved which allows the consumer to establish their position as an active consumer, assisting with the production of the object’s consumption and representation (Holt, 1995). Similar approaches have been outlined by Celsi et al. (1993) in which the participant assists within the community in order to be accepted into the inner circle of fellow consumers. Consumption, in that case, is not solely based on the actual consumption but extends further. Holt (1995) described it as instrumental consumption, as the consumption is only the beginning of an integrative process.

Additionally, it is noted that it depends on the level of control a consumer has in terms of the production of experiences, such as the contrast between a skydiver (Celsi et al, 1993) and a spectator at a sports game (Holt, 1995). Within the skydiving consumption, the participant has a significant control over the outcome by simply being able to steer and control the kite according to his/her will, whereas spectators have very limited control of the outcome of what is occurring in front of them (Holt, 1995). This results in the creation of a fantasy and imaginary social world (Caughey, 1984) in which the spectators are managing and in charge of play. Thus, there is a self-production of the occurrences and the creation of alternate strategies of bonding with those deemed the official producers of the object; the players, coaches, and media (Holt, 1995).

2.5.2.3 Personalising

Building upon the method of producing, personalisation appears to be an influencing factor within consumer behaviour and approaches to specific object consumptions. Personalising consumption is heavily linked to the previously illustrated example in which consumers tend to manipulate the situation into an imaginary social world in which they assert control and influence over the object of consumption (Holt, 1995). Personalising allows the consumer to manipulate the meaning-carrying properties of a mass-produced, or mass audience targeted object in order to symbolically and physically tailor them according to their own desires (McCracken, 1986; Belk, 1988; Belk et al., 1989; Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991; Holt, 1995). It is argued that this form of manipulation is conducted in order to alter institutional elements, these can include the redecoration of a house to achieve a more personal appearance (McCracken, 1986) or home cooking a Thanksgiving meal (Wallendorf & Arnould, 1991). However, as Holt (1995) counter-argued this specific kind of manipulation is based more within the area of “assimilating rather than personalizing actions” (p8), due to the reason that they indicate a stronger motive of consumer integration into a collective identity instead of an attempt to singularise objects.

Holt (1995) additionally argues that even in a high assimilated environment with no manipulating control of the object of consumption, consumers still make an attempt to individualise their consumption even if it is a limited change, such as wearing stickers, badges, or pins and adding their personalisation to institutionalised aspects.

2.5.2.4 Personalising and Harley-Davidson

Consumers are not “really interested in the objects of consumption” (Schembri, 2009, p1300) but rather the social links a product, such as a Harley-Davidson motorcycle which are the main interest for consumers (Cova & Cova, 2002; Schembri, 2009). An essential part is not the “why” the consumer participates but rather the “how” this participation occurs (Holt, 1995) which can be seen in the material focused consumption of Harley-Davidson. It is not just the motorcycle that is important it is the participation in a new secondary framework that appeals to the consumer and offers a new self-transformative environment in which the consumer can establish himself. Different from the examples of Holt (1995), Harley-Davidson riders can be compared to skydivers in regard to the control that they have over the consumption as they are in the driving seat and taking control of what is occurring. Thus, producing their own approach to motorcycling rather than the creation of an imaginative scenario. This significant difference to Holt’s research (1995) correspondingly impacts on how

personalisation is conducted. Rather than a fantasy creation of the consumer, the consumer interferes with the material object to make it most suitable for themselves. Harley-Davidson offers a product in which this manner of individualising their products is welcomed and appreciated by the participating consumers. It can even be used as an anchor to outline one's willingness to participate due to the care and thought that is going into the process of customisation. The original motorcycle is seen as a blank canvas which the rider can use to paint their own identity, the motorcycle as "artwork on wheels" (Schembri, 2009, p1304).

2.5.3 Consumption as Classification

Consumption as classification distinguishes between "us" and "them" in the consumer world, enhancing affiliation and distinction simultaneously (Mick & DeMoss, 1990; Holt, 1995). It builds the foundation of communication and interaction with other consumers. Consumption classification can be achieved in two ways, (1) Classifying through objects, (2) Classifying through actions (Holt, 1995).

2.5.3.1 Classifying through Objects

Belk (1988, p160) suggests that "we learn, define, and remind ourselves who we are by our possession". Most objects investigated in terms of classification are material goods used as an indication of status, such as housing, automobiles, clothing, or food. Thus, they can be presented to others by displaying one's possessions (Fischer & Price, 1992; Kleine & Kernan, 1991). However, whilst these tangible assets are easy to display, Holt (1995) states that this form display is incomplete in regard to non-material goods or publicly accessible objects.

If a consumption object is of an experiential nature, the consumer attempts to capture the moments through various objects that can be associated with the original consumption. Using Holt's example of spectator sports, attempts at intangible consumption can be observed through the purchase of club insignia, souvenirs, or photos as primary markers for the affiliation but lack the credibility to the extent that this object affiliation is of quality and intensity (1995). Holt (1995) outlines that only extended participation and long-term affiliation can give the participation its quality and therefore obtain a form of new social standing in the consumer's secondary environment. Anecdotes of previous participation are often utilised as a tool to strengthen their arguments and descriptions of affiliation (Holt, 1995), the form of storytelling and sharing experience is an important aspect of subcultural participation

and uses the meaning of the object to classify oneself (Celsi et al., 1993; Holt, 1995; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Fournier, 2000). Classification is not solely bound to material goods but also uses non-material objects to shape their identity through participation.

Gao et al. (2016) outlined that consumption is motivated through the status symbolic arguing that power distance belief (PDB) consumption is in relation to the status of others, as high-PDB consumers tend to adjust their consumption in relationship to their environment. This results in a difference in consumption, in which high-PDB consumers are more likely to engage in status consumption when the status of others is not superior (either similar or inferior). However, interestingly it has been argued by Gao et al. (2016) that, once the status of others is superior, high-PDB consumers are less likely to compensate by engaging in status consumption. However, this argument is based on the level of power distant belief which is an individual understanding. It does not falsify the previous argument but simply adds a new form of understanding of individual perception to the argument of status acquisition and satisfaction to consumption.

2.5.3.2 Consumption through Actions

As previously mentioned, there are two aspects to consumption as classification, one being classification through objects and the other being consumption through action. In contrast to classification through objects, which provides the content of the classificatory act, action classifications illustrate the manner the consumer interacts with the consumption object (Holt, 1995). However, similarities can be found in the behavioural aspect due to the nature of the surrounding. The consumer is actively participating in a selected subcultural environment and adapts respective behavioural traits accordingly. Whilst participation is a key aspect of the consumption there are subtle participation traits that are learned and understood during long-term participation. Through specific subculturally accepted behavioural patterns, the deepened understanding and affiliation is indicated (Holt, 1995). It outlines the individual consumer's relative standing within the secondary social world. It strengthens the indication of being a "real" participant, as an example golfing can be used to illustrate this impact, as real golfers do not waste time looking for lost balls. It is an acceptance of the occurrence and adaptations to the norms of the entered environments based on communication and long-term affiliation.

Related to Harley-Davidson

The notion of “us” and “them”, as outlined in the research by Holt (1995), can be identified in the world of Harley consumers. There is a distinct differentiation between Harley Riders, Harley affiliated riders, and non-Harley riders (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Extreme brand criticism can be found in various slogans such as “There are two types of people in the world: those who own a Harley and those who wish they did” or prints on T-shirts saying, “I own a Harley, not just the shirt” (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995, p50). The distinction between “us” and “them” is a strong aspect of the Harley community and loyalty is identified through participation within the communal aspect of consumption (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Schembri, 2009). The manner in which participation occurs assists consumption as classification through various means. Whilst the material item of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle is at the focal point of participation, it is important to note that the object is not solely identity shaping for consumer classification. The means by which consumption is conducted, is like an unwritten etiquette guide for Harley consumers, and these behavioural patterns are shown through identification with the brand through patches, stickers, and predominately the motorcycle (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Schembri, 2009).

2.5.4 Consumption as Play

The work of Holt (1995) has led to a valuable approach to perceive consumption as a state of play. Here, the consumption is not driven by the product purchase, rather the purchase is utilised as an access key to an environment in which the consumer can enjoy his/her time and shine with the knowledge of the culture they are entering. The aspect of play is essential in various ways as it indicates no other reason than the joy of participation. This is an approach which is underappreciated within academic research but has been around for decades. The social element within consumption is an important attribute to understand purchasing behaviour and the risks that are taken in order to consume.

External influences have been explained to have a limiting role, but in terms of consumption as play they can promote consumption and participation. A different approach is in place at this stage, as consumption is not occurring for social pressures, but consumption is enhanced to participate in specific brand orientated subcultures. The product is seen as the entry ticket to the subculture and therefore is at the centre of focus within the subculture, but the then experienced culture is surrounding the product which allows the consumer to experience a wider range of

subcultural connections (Schembri, 2009). Rather than the consumer manipulating the meaning of specific products to their personal identity, Holt's study (1995) has the opposite approach in a transformative process in place in which a new candidate changes his own perception and makes it more suitable to the group before being accepted as a full member of the subculture (Schouten et al., 2006; Schembri, 2009). The post-purchase lifestyle is purchased along with the product raising its meaning to a new level of oneself through consumption.

This post-purchase lifestyle can only occur through repeated participation such as repeatedly attending baseball games, continuous participation within the motorcycle environment (Holt, 1995, Schouten & McAlexander, 1995, Schembri, 2009), as subcultural environments require a certain level of expertise and understanding in order to reach the desired level of interaction. The product consumption becomes the resource for interaction through consumption (Holt, 1995; Schembri, 2009). The consumption of hedonic purchases allows the consumer to create a field for interaction and reach a communal dimension of consumption with strong emotional bonds (Holt, 1995; Cova, 1997; Schembri, 2009).

Consumption as play is an interactive model, therefore, it requires communal participation in consumption and can be seen as a socialising "tool and the brand is the symbol of the socialisation" (Schembri, 2009, p1307). Sharing emotional experiences of consuming Harley-Davidson embeds an individual in a communal fabric of relationships (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Martin et al., 2006; Schembri, 2009).

However, this effect of communal interactions and shared emotional experience, as introduced by Holt (1995) and examined within the Harley-Davidson subculture by Schembri (2009), can only commence in a post-purchase environment but must be seen as an outcome of consumption. It allows participation to be enhanced but does not motivate the purchase in the first place even though it may be a desire, the satisfaction must not automatically follow from the expectations. Only through repeated consumption of the purchased product in the subcultural environment, can the state of play through interaction occur.

The motivation to commit to the lifestyle of a subculture opens up a new way of life and understanding of oneself in relation to a product. While a functional but unique positioning may differentiate a brand in a competitive field, the personification of brand attributes generates brand personality (Patterson, 1999). Personalising inanimate

objects (Aaker, 1997) and humanising brands (Levy, 1985), it infuses them with a distinct personality, simplifying brand choice and encouraging a preference for particular brands (Sirgy, 1982)" (Schembri, 2009, p1300).

It allows consumers to access an environment that they would not be able to access through non-consumption. The intrinsic developments of the consumer are not solely focused on the purchase of the motorcycle itself, which may be influenced through various other streams of excuses, but most dominantly outline purchase intentions that go beyond the motorcycle.

Holt's theory (1995) conceives consumption as play, where the consumption object is a resource for interaction (Holt, 1995; Schembri, 2009) and is a valuable perspective for the current research.

2.5.4.1 Related to Harley-Davidson

Consumption as play cannot be seen as an integral part of the purchase motivation. It is a form of interaction that occurs with both the product and the surroundings equally. In this case, the purchase of a Harley-Davidson is an entry ticket to a new world of product-specific interactions, a blank canvas to be personalised to establish oneself in a community. This particular community does not actively recruit new members but has possible new members approach the community (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Schembri, 2009). Schembri (2009) describes the communal dimensions achieved in the Harley-Davidson environment through participation in rallies and rides and how consumption becomes a socialising tool as the community and the Harley become a part of who you are (p1307).

Consumption as play can be seen as an active influence that may enhance consumption long term by creating a surrounding that the consumer would like to remain a part of, but it may not be seen as an original motivator to the purchase of Harley-Davidson. Harley-Davidson involves a web of community that the company actively supports through the HOG chapters. In such chapters the element of communication and participation creates a feeling of belonging that consumers may wish to remain part of, but this can only occur in a post-purchase environment after the initial Harley-Davidson purchase.

2.6 How can this be modelled to explain hedonic consumption within a framework that considers the economic risks involved?

The implications of human decision-making processes involving risk have been outlined and the next step is to formulate a framework that considers all elements in relation to risk. To summarise the previous aspects, there are significant internal and external influencing elements that can adapt the perception of risk to a degree that it becomes nearly irrelevant and to the extent that both household and personal risks are mostly ignored. However, it is important to note, that external influences may only lead to an intrinsic debate and must not be seen as a direct influencing element to the risk perception experienced by the consumer. Additionally, the miscalculation of risk is a temporarily bound perception which will only take place in the moment, this may generate a feeling of regret in hindsight due to a changed environment and belated realisation of the erroneous interpretation during the decision-making process of the hedonic product.

External factors will be regarded as a significant informant to intrinsic decision making and it will need to be outlined that these influences are based on social pressures in relation to professional and private life which may ignite fantasies of frivolous consumption to take flight from these external pressures.

As discussed, other aspects are important such as the impact the affect heuristics can have on consumer decision-making processes and its (mis-)evaluation under risk. The findings of Celsi et al. (1993) and Schouten and McAlexander (1995), concern the addition of the fourth dimension to consumption which outlines a state of play as a motivator for consumption purposes (Holt, 1995). Research by Holt (1995) indicates a strong element of social connection as a motivator in a post-purchase environment. Furthermore, internal influences can be seen in nostalgic memories which can have a significant impact on consumption behaviour and show a desire to recreate past experiences which may be in relation to the experiences or appearances of certain products which further support consumption.

All aspects will be considered to illustrate a more detailed decision-making framework that allows consumers to consider or in this case to disregard possible risks, thus allowing frivolous hedonic indulgence.

2.6.1 External

As illustrated previously, external influences through culture and social interactions can influence the ability to evaluate economic risks and therefore impact purchasing behaviour. As social interactions are a fundamental way of receiving information for humans, they can shape the way items and purchases are perceived. Consumption through or even for social interaction is an influential approach, especially when looking at hedonic consumption from a leisure perspective, as consumers do not just buy a product they begin to participate in a subcultural context and are motivated through others to immerse themselves in the subculture. Such external pressures must not be disregarded in order to fully understand the consumption of luxurious leisure goods. Whilst previous research has focused on leisure activities (see Celsi et al., 1993, Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Holt & Thompson, 2004), its impact is still to be found on brand specific items. Societal and subcultural aspects are in place which illustrate a consumer pressuring form which will move from external influences on internal stimuli, such as psycho-social and psychology, which will be discussed further at a later stage. However, it has to be reiterated that these pressures may only be effective when the consumer is willing to participate in these unique subcultures. It is not just the factor of being hooked to the environment, it is reaching a new personal way of receiving achievement. As illustrated in research by Celsi et al. (1993) in which skydiving subcultural participants earn respect through the amount of skydiving jumps similarly it has been illustrated by Schouten & McAlexander (1995) and Holt & Thompson (2004) that motorcyclists earn their respect and sense of achievement through participation by the number of miles ridden on the motorcycle or by travelling to national or international rallies. The participation in leisure activities organised by a subculture allows the consumers a sense of achievement which they might struggle to achieve outside said subculture, either in work or at home. Such an argument shows that high-risk economic consumption through indulgence in frivolous consumption can be related back to psychological elements that affect consumption. Extrinsic motivations are in place however they cannot be effective if intrinsic emotions are not in place. Achievement is a very dominant feature within male consumption, as identified by Holt and Thompson (2004), in which consumption plays an important role for reaching a more stable and free persona which leaves extrinsic pressures behind.

2.6.1.1 Foresight

Consumers cannot be given the benefit of the doubt to have such active foresight in which they can foresee future events and satisfaction (Tully et al., 2015) based on social interactions. This satisfaction may only occur in the post-purchase environment in which the consumer finds himself. The evaluation of risks involved, of either economic or personal risks, are not impacted by the possible foresight of future satisfaction through participation. Social and cultural interactions may not give a consumer the motivation to disregard involved risks but merely form a basis for thought and creation of a purchase intention through imagination. From this point where a possible consumer is motivated by others to purchase specific products, the process moves from extrinsic motivation to intrinsic debate. Frivolous consumption is not conducted without debate on whether the product is worthwhile committing to or if it would cause too much financial or personal risks.

Whilst frivolous consumption of luxury items has been investigated through purchases of luxury items such as luxury brand sandwiches or beauty products (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009), it lacks the substantial financial investment that a motorcycle purchase brings. Understandably this form of research cannot be conducted under laboratory conditions. Thus, purchase thoughts can begin from an extrinsic point but will not be completed without further intrinsic processes.

2.6.2 Internal

As demonstrated above, external influences can give a proportional motivation for the creation of purchase intentions, which will move from extrinsic impacting factors to intrinsic processes. Within the internal progression of decision-making the real purchase intentions are being created. This is especially true regarding luxury consumption which brings a high element of physical and financial risks with it. Within the intrinsic realm, the debate and evaluation to buy or not to buy will be conducted. This includes the evaluation of possible risks involved and the possible creation of purchase desires.

A strong influencing factor for this intrinsic form of decision making is the affect heuristic, which is an initial and subconscious evaluation of affection towards a product which will impact all subsequent thought processes. It is the initial thought on whether a product is liked or not. This also impacts the evaluation of risks which may be underestimated if the product is liked and overestimated if it is not. This affection

may be created partially through external influences but mainly consists of the personal understanding at that moment and thus is situationally bound and may not be consistent over time. Ultimately, only a temporary risk-seeking or risk averse attitude is created (Schwartz & Hasnain, 2001). The affect heuristic is an integral component of consumer behaviour as it not only describes various thought processes within decision making but also adds the element of individualism to the consumption.

Hedonic consumption can only take place if the purchases reflects one's belief of the necessity to achieve happiness. This could be conducted through various streams of consumption such as food, art, or more frivolous aspects such as luxury accommodation or luxury vehicles that exceed the norms. The individual aspect to consumption is key, as someone who does not like smoking will not smoke, if someone does not like the taste of liquorice s/he will not consume liquorice-based products, and a similar argument can be made for motorcycling as either a consumer likes the concept of motorcycling and finds it intriguing, but, if the contrary is the case, consumption will not take place. More than one billion smokers (WHO, 2018) ignore the possible side effects of cancer when smoking, risk of diabetes is ignored through continuous consumption of sweets, and the perception of the risk of death through a road accident on a motorcycle is also perceived as limited.

Hedonic consumption can only take place if the individual perceives the product as positive and therefore has positive emotions towards it. It does not result in an automatic purchase, as various factors can come into play which will not allow the purchase to be made such as asthma for an individual who feels the desire to smoke, or an upcoming dentist appointment may limit the consumptions of sweets. However, at the very minimum positive affection towards consumption of possible harmful products is in place.

Furthermore, elements of fantasy and imagination are being processed from a psychological perspective are. These are linked to different channels such as nostalgia which may enhance product selection based on positive memories and attempts for the recreation of these past moments, or elements of fantasy in which the consumers visualises the expected emotions during product usage. Research conducted by Connell et al. (2014) identified that thoughts of nostalgia can generate a biased product evaluation and its possible benefits or downfalls depending on whether or not the product is liked and may lead to a lifelong bias (Zhou et al., 2011, Connell et al., 2014). Such bias may hinder purchases of competitor's products. In

the case of Harley-Davidson there would be two possible scenarios which may affect product selection within the motorcycle domain. (1) The comparison between Harley-Davidson and Indian Motorcycles, which have been fierce competitors since the creation of Harley-Davidson, or (2) a contrast between more generic concepts are made such as cruiser/chopper motorcycles in contrast to sport/speed motorcycles. Preferences may be related to previous experiences and nostalgic memories of the past.

Additionally, it has to be mentioned that consumption can be influenced by factors which are motivated through external influences but relate closely back to one's personal perception and power-seeking attributes or power distance belief (PDB) as in research by Gao et al. (2016). Individual consumer can be influenced to enhance their positions through consumption but, depending on their PDB attribute, will not do so if other people around them are in a higher and better position as they are taking into consideration their personal PDB perception. However, consumption can be enhanced if there are feelings of superiority in relation to surrounding people (Gao et al., 2016). Feelings of inferiority and superiority can directly impact consumption and especially frivolous hedonic spending behaviours.

2.6.3 The Fourth Dimension/ Consumption as Play

Holt (1995) considers the three dimensions of consumption and offers a fourth, consumption as play. The first three dimensions are; consuming as an experience through psychological perceptions (Celsi et al., 1993; Belk et al., 1989; Holt, 1995), consuming as integration and the subsequent manipulation of product meaning and product symbolism (Rook, 1985; McCracken, 1986; Belk, 1988; Belk et al., 1989; Holt, 1995), and consuming as classification such as status symbolic consumption (Sahlins, 1976; Douglas & Isherwood, 1979; Holt, 1995).

Holt (1995) identifies an interesting approach which allows consumption to be perceived as a state of play in which the consumption is not driven by the product that is being purchased but the purchase is utilised as an access key to an environment in which the consumer can enjoy his/her time and shine with knowledge of the culture they have entered. The aspect of play is essential in various ways as it indicates no reason other than the joy of participation, an approach which is underappreciated within academic research, whilst being a concept that has been around for decades.

The commonly known phrase “Boys do not grow up; their toys just get bigger and more expensive” indicates an awareness of such purchase intentions that are beyond reasoning. The social element within consumption is an important attribute to understand purchasing behaviour and the risks that are taken in order to consume.

External influences have been examined as limiting influences elements. It has to be noted that a different approach is in place at this stage, as consumption is not occurring for social pressures, but is enhanced to participate in specific brand orientated subcultures. The product is seen as the entry ticket to the subculture and therefore is at the centre of focus within the subculture. Then, the experienced culture is surrounding the product which allows the consumer to experience a wider range of subcultural connections (Schembri, 2009). Rather than the consumer manipulating the meaning of specific products to their personal identity, a contradicting approach is outlined in Holt’s study (1995) in which a product is selected that changes one’s perception to make it more suitable for the product. A process of assimilating is in place for such subcultural consumer-focused adaptations (Holt, 1995). A transformative process, nearly of a Masonic nature, is in place in which a new candidate first changes his own perception and aligns it more to the group before being accepted as a full member of the subculture (Martin et al., 2006; Schembri, 2009). The post-purchase lifestyle is being purchased along with the product raising its meaning to a new level through consumption.

However, it is important to note that this post-purchase lifestyle which is acquired can only occur through repeated participation as outlined in Holt’s research (1995) of repeatedly attending baseball games or continuous participation within the motorcycle environment (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995, Schembri, 2009). Subcultural environments require a certain level of expertise and understanding in order to reach the desired level of interaction. The product consumption becomes the resource for interaction through consumption (Holt, 1995; Schembri, 2009). The consumption of hedonic purchases allows the consumer to create a field for interaction and reach a communal dimension of consumption with strong emotional bonds (Holt, 1995; Cova, 1997; Schembri, 2009)

It is important to keep in mind that consumption as play is an interactive model, and it requires communal participation in consumption, socialisation is the “tool and the brand is the symbol of the socialization” (Schembri, 2009, p1307). Sharing emotional

experiences of consuming a Harley-Davidson embeds an individual in a communal fabric of relationships (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Martin et al., 2006; Schembri, 2009).

However, as outlined earlier, this effect of communal interactions and shared emotional experience can only commence in a post-purchase environment but must be seen not as a definite outcome of consumption. It only allows participation to be enhanced but not motivate the purchase in the first place even though it may be a desire the satisfaction must not automatically follow suit with expectations. Only through repeated consumption of the purchased product in the subcultural environment can the state of play through interaction can occur.

2.6.4 Economic Risk

Preferences which affect hedonic consumption are also based on the nature of the product which may alter economic decisions, consumers tend to prefer experiences over material goods and seek long-term satisfaction through experiential purchases (Van Boven and Gilovich, 2003). In contrast, it is argued by Tully et al. (2015) that under financial constraint long lasting hedonic material goods are preferred. Despite emotions regarding financial constraint, a significant amount of annual family income is spent on non-utilitarian goods thus increasing vulnerability to future financial problems when they arise. A study conducted by Experian Simmons (2011) established that within a black U.S. community \$5,500 of a \$25,000 annual income are spent on discretionally, hedonic goods. A discrepancy between financial ability and hedonic consumption can be seen in consumers. Money is spent on various items which add up to significant amounts and produce a higher level of risk for the future from a financial standpoint. At the same time, hedonic consumption is perceived as a reward something that consumers purchase in order to reward themselves for a job well done or others for their participation. This reward scheme can be seen as effective, Coelho do Vale et al. (2016) explain that behaving badly riskily at times and doing things that might not be the most reasonable decision offers a higher return and motivation and therefore increases productivity over saving and denying themselves.

Additionally, breaking down targets in smaller steps increases intrinsic motivation as positive feedback received is utilised to achieve more distant goals (Zhang & Gao, 2016). A sense of deserving and achievement can allow the consumer to disregard potential negative side effects of the purchasing behaviour within luxury items.

As mentioned above, the risk to the consumer is a temporary perception in which s/he places an evaluation of side effects onto a product, this evaluation can vary in outcome depending on the level of affection experienced at the outset.

Economic risk also needs to be examined in relation to the perception of the fourth dimension (Holt, 1995). Even if a one-off participation carries a low cost, continuous participation requires a significant financial investment, as with attending baseball games (Holt, 1995). It follows that financial risks are not equally relevant to the consumer under Holt's fourth dimension (1995) as it appears that the desire to commune and to socialise is predominant in this regard.

Holt (1995) demonstrates that less desirable and more uncomfortable seats can be sold for three times their ticket value due to opportunity they offer for communal participation and the "carnavalesque atmosphere" (Holt, 1995, p9). Through the communal desires, consumption disregards benefits in terms of comfort or safety and instead places the importance of the surroundings higher than financial risks from a consumer perspective. It necessarily follows that consumption can be motivated through the possibility of a good atmosphere surrounding the event/product. This can be more important to consumers than comfort or less financially risky behaviour, even though the atmosphere cannot be predetermined and may not turn out as expected. In terms of this fourth dimension of consumption, financial risks make only a limited contribution and the consumer tends not to see it as relevant to the decision-making process.

2.6.5 Resulting Model

Figure 2.1 illustrates the theoretical framework used for this research. It is apparent that extrinsic influence play only a partial role and are not as strong as the intrinsic influences on decision-making processes.

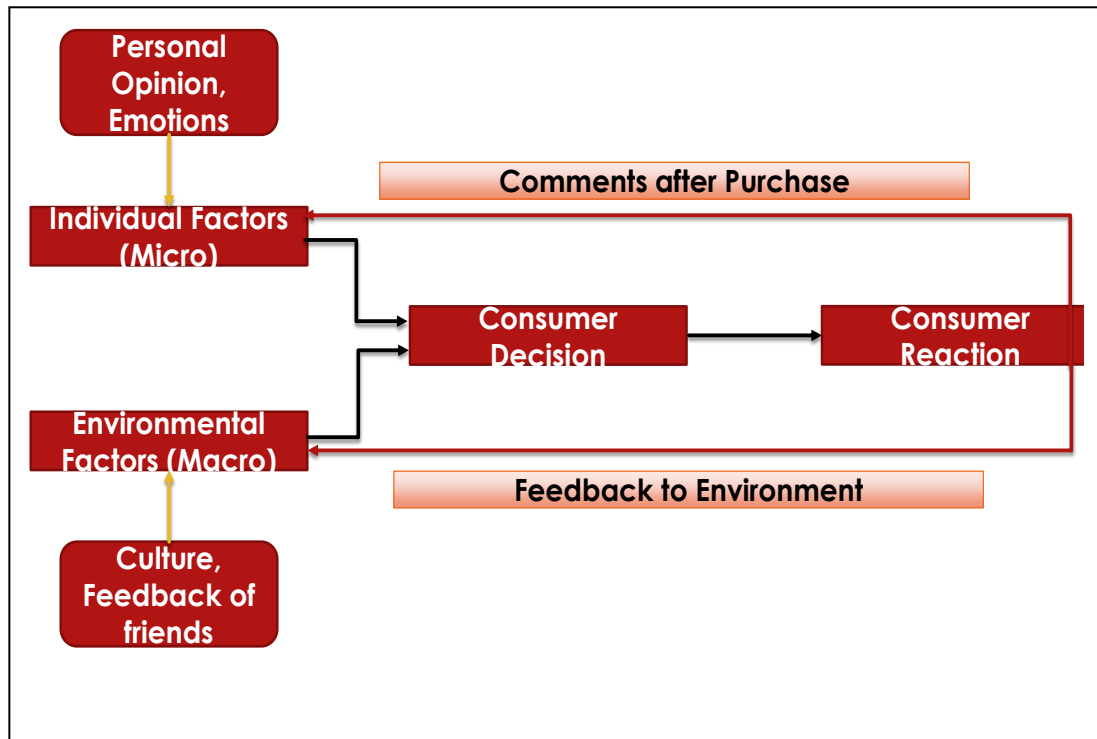


Figure 2.1: Adaptation Theoretical Framework (Zhao et al. 2014)

An adaptation to the framework is necessary in which environmental factors are less significant and only seen as a reinforcing element to the decision-making process for masculine hedonic consumption under risk. Instead, a more appropriate model appears for hedonic consumption (see Figure 2.2). It includes Holt's fourth dimension of play in an attempt to capture the motivation of a higher meaning to oneself over and above the product, the aspect of community in subcultures must not be disregarded as an impacting element and will be explored further in this research.

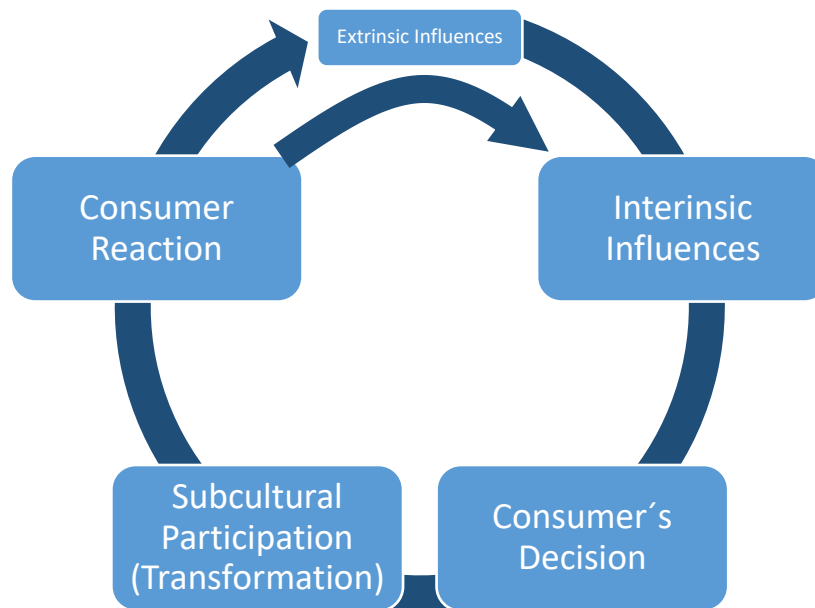


Figure 2.2: Initial Decision making process diagram made by Researcher considering internal and external factors

The Diagram of decision-making processes captures more of the reality of decision-making progressions in relation to hedonic consumption. There is a direct connection between external and internal processes which influence the decisions to be made. However, the extrinsic influences are less significant than the intrinsic influences.

2.6.5.1 *Extrinsic Informant*

External influences should be seen as an informant to internal developments. External factors can include societal pressures not directly for specific consumption such as peer pressures but also from work or home-related pressures which drive a consumer to seek a release opportunity. This release of pressures can be found in consumption which may elevate one's freedom (Holt and Thompson, 2004). Consumers find it in specific risk-seeking leisure activities such as skydiving (Celsi et al., 1993), or Motorcycling (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) which create a temporary sanctuary for the consumer to escape to.

2.6.5.2 *Intrinsic Decision Making*

Intrinsic decision making is the more relevant field within hedonic consumption. Due to the nature of hedonic products, greater justification is sought by the consumer and this process takes place internally in order to reach an excuse or reason for a consumption which is neither necessary nor directly relevant to the consumer's life at

that stage. Various intrinsic elements can come into play in order to find the justification and come to a positive decision. The main aspect is the taste or the effect a product has on the consumer by which a decision is made and subsequent evaluations influenced. As outlined previously, in the case of a positive effect of the product the consumer tends to disregard financial and personal risk that surrounds the purchase. The consumer also seeks other elements that can enhance the position of simple taste to justify the upcoming purchase. Aspects of nostalgia can come into play, nostalgia can be a strong influence as it outlines the desire to recreate past experiences and especially comes into play when looking at nostalgic environments. Harley-Davidson motorcycles tend to be placed in nostalgic surroundings enhancing such emotions. Elements of risk are perceived but are ameliorated by the affect heuristic and so seen as temporarily less significant by the decision maker.

2.6.5.3 Subcultural Attraction & Self-Transformative Desires

Harley-Davidson cannot be understood without taking into consideration the subculture that the consumers enter through their purchase, an intrinsic and extrinsic factor. Whilst these are external factors in the post-purchase environment, they remain a fantasy during the decision-making process and therefore need to be classified as internal influences as there is uncertainty if expectations actually become reality. The environment of community that is in place allows the consumer to break out of their day to day routine and reach for a temporary transformation of self through the participation within the community. The purchased product does not just receive a created meaning from the consumer but rather the consumer receives meaning from the product.

2.6.6 Economic Risk

Economic risks are an important factor to look at during hedonic consumption and the decision-making process, as there must be a consistent disregard of financial and personal risks before committing to the consumption (Finucane et al., 2000; Slovic et al., 2007). However, the disregard of financial risks may be different within individual decision-making processes, as it depends on how the costs are seen. One consumer may only see the price tag for more frivolous consumption whereas others see the price tag and also consider that only partial losses will occur due to depreciation rates but overall the product maintains a resale value which reduces financial risks.

2.6.6.1 Affect Heuristic Influences

However, the impacts of affect heuristics and its tainted perception of risks comes into play at various stages such as the point of purchase which involves significant financial investment and the perception that these financial risks are not as high as previously outlined (Finucane et al, 2000). Affect heuristic is an integral part of the decision-making process (Slovic et al., 2002; Slovic et al. 2007), as it outlines not only a thought process that occurs during decision making but also adds the emotional influences to intrinsic justifications (Alhakami & Slovic, 1994) and results in purchases that are enjoyed regardless of the possible financial downfalls (Zajonc, 1980).

2.6.6.2 Subcultural Consumption

Subcultural experiences are a contribution to the emotional decision-making processes in a post-purchase environment. The purchased product allows the consumer to participate in a structured environment with clear hierarchies and systematic organisation. It is an important factor to take into consideration, especially when looking at a Harley-Davidson case study, as the freedom that the riders experience is partially related to the environment, they are participating in order to create their own place of flight (Holt & Thompson, 2004).

Whilst it can also be seen as a contributing factor to the consumer decision-making process, it is important to note that these are only in relation to fantasies of a post-purchase life. These shared experiences will subsequently form a new understanding of both deepened admiration and connection to the product or may push people away from it post-purchase. Whatever the emotional connection to the product or the environment an opinion will be formed, and future purchases may be impacted by the experiences created in connection to the purchased product and the subcultural experiences. These experiences will ultimately be transferred back into the surrounding through talks with friends or the sharing of the experiences through another medium. Whatever the subsequent emotional experiences, future consumption may be influenced and biased based on past experiences within a subcultural environment.

2.6.7 Review of discussion

Through the proposed framework an appropriate connection within the decision-making processes can be identified. Consumption fantasies may commence through external influences however it must not obtain a significant position within decision-

making processes in relation to hedonic consumption as ultimately decision making will take place within an intrinsic environment where a variety of relevant discussion and the search for an excuse to indulge in frivolous consumption supports the decisions. Within the intrinsic processes the risks are misinterpreted and estimates regarding future financial risks are misconstrued based on the bias towards the product in question. Often, excuses will be supported through financial arguments in which it is stated that the consumption is not financially risky as only holding costs will need to be paid and the product, especially within the vehicular environments, retain some resale value. These intrinsic discussions allow the consumer to seek frivolous consumption which may include other factors such nostalgia or even emotions of earning hedonic consumption through success in other areas.

External influences have often been outlined in a post-purchase lifestyle but tend to fail to be involved in actual decision making, thus strengthening the statement of giving it a lesser value than internal influences. However, it has to be noted that the fantasies of the participation in subcultural surrounding may increase the desire to consume and create fantasies of shared emotions through participation. As Holt (1995) argued consumption can be influenced by the desire to play and rather than manufacturing a meaning of the product a new personal identity can be created in relation to the product.

Through a transformative environment, future consumption may be influenced and therefore require the cyclical structure as the experienced emotions are both fed back into the external environment and the internal self, based on the experience of previous consumption.

2.7. Harley-Davidson and the Motorcycle industry; License to ride!

This section considers more precisely Harley-Davidson and the fascination it offers its consumers and increases temptation towards their products through a 110-year-old mystique. This will include a specific focus on two previously outlined pieces of research of Schouten and McAlexander (1995) and Schembri (2009) focusing on two different geographical locations in regard to the Harley-Davidson subculture present within this community. Demystifying Harley-Davidson is a challenging task as it is much more than the vehicular object but rather an object filled with emotions which interact with the consumer. It represents a transformative place for the consumption

of freedom and risk acceptance, with as few limits as possible. Harley's current representation now contradicts its history, originally built for speed and power it now showcases inner peace through limited speed and loud noises.

It is also important to consider specific consumption that is closely related to governmental restrictions which makes consumption more selective. However, it is an important aspect to the discussed financial or household risks. The process of obtaining a motorcycle driving license, an admiration of motorcycling and acceptance for the involved risks is predetermined by the consumer.

2.7.1 The Harley-Davidson Case Study

Harley-Davidson represents the ideal case study to illustrate the importance of emotional influences in regard to decision-making processes. However, for the case of Harley-Davidson in relation to consumer behaviour, to the best of the researcher's knowledge limited academic research is available. The research that has been conducted using Harley-Davidson, even tangentially, is focused on the US market (see Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Schembri (2009) recreated Schouten and McAlexander's US work in the Australian market with success. However, research of this nature in regard to Harley-Davidson is yet to be conducted. Additionally, the research conducted by Schouten and McAlexander (1995) and Schembri (2009) illustrates post-purchase characteristics and behavioural traits in the subcultural environment entered. It outlines an important aspect of consumption as it is not solely the product that is consumed but also the social aspect of motorcycling.

2.7.1.1 Harley-Davidson outside the US Market- Fetish for Americana still intact?

In the above ways, the research conducted by Schembri (2009) is more valuable to this current research as it outlines a non-US market environment and aspect which is important to take into consideration when looking at an American Icon which embodies US symbolism throughout and is not shy to utilise American symbolism on their motorcycles or clothing.

The representation of Americana outside the United States and how it is perceived in various locations is essential to capture the global admiration Harley-Davidson has created. It is argued that part of the success of Harley-Davidson within other markets outside the United States is related to the fetish world for old Americana (Maz, 1985). This statement could not have been supported through the findings of Schembri

(2009) as she illustrated in her work that the Americana aspect of the motorcycle does not add to the appeal of the Harley-Davidson motorcycle. On the contrary, it is perceived as a negative and causes concern (Schembri, 2009). Instead, countermeasures are taken in order to add more non-American national pride to the consumption, such as exchanging the American flag with, in this case, an Australian flag. "The Australian distinction and patriotic orientation of this subculture occurs in quite subtle ways. Beyond the flag flying noted above, the rally organization reflects the Australian flavour of this subculture" (Schembri, 2009, p1306). This suggests that the argument of the fetish for Americana is not valid for the consumption purposes outside of the American market. It needs to be researched how consumption in the European market compares to the US and Australian analyses and how this is significant within the European environment.

Since Americana seems to be irrelevant for consumption purposes outside of the United States in relation to Harley-Davidson there needs to be another factor which allows consumers to enjoy Harley motorcycles outside of the US. One possible factor is in relation to the design of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. The design that is used remains true to itself and offers little change to the design output. This excludes technological advances which will be slowly but steadily added to the motorcycles such as new stronger and bigger engines. Outlining these design features raises the previously mentioned point in which it is stated that nostalgic emotions may impact consumption (Huang et al., 2016). Through the continuously kept rough design of the motorcycles, these emotions may be enhanced and allow consumers to reminisce about past experiences, which may be directly or indirectly with the brand of Harley-Davidson.

Additionally, consideration can be given to the brand logo which represents the Harley-Davidson, the bar and shield emblem has not been changed since its original creation in 1910. Through such loyalty to the brand logo, the brand image is further enhanced by the brand recognisability as well as the nostalgic emotions. Only a few brands are loyal to their original brand logo like Harley-Davidson such as Coca-Cola, Nivea or Mercedes-Benz; adding to the nostalgic element within consumption and creating a sense of familiarity.

2.7.1.2 Harley-Davidson Subcultural Consumption

Harley-Davidson is not solely the product consumed but rather the subcultural side in the context of the product (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Schembri, 2009). This is an essential addition to the understanding of consumer behaviour as it outlines important aspects of the consumer behavioural process of decision making. External influences may not be as relevant, but this does not diminish the argument that consumption can be motivated in order to participate in a subcultural environment with the focus on one specific brand. Harley-Davidson outlines the ideal case study to show motivations that reach beyond the value of the product and the importance of the environment associated with the brand of Harley-Davidson. Belk (1988, p160) suggests that “we learn, define, and remind ourselves who we are by our possession”, this was in relation to the Macintosh brand, but is relevant when using Harley-Davidson as a case study. Through consumption a self-transformational process occurs in which other exterior elements are non-existent to the rider who can enjoy and leave all struggles behind. In one of the limited research available that recognises Harley-Davidson’s potential to understand consumption, a participant outlines the effect the use of his Harley has on him and his environment stating that his children run outside as soon as they hear the loud Harley noise knowing that their father will be in good mood after the ride (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). High levels of satisfaction are achieved nearly instantly and are not related to the duration of the ride which may vary significantly over the year. The combination of the “vibration of the engines and riding a Harley is an experience that somehow seduces you to a place of peacefulness” (Schembri, 2009, p1304)

However, as Cova and Cova (2002) argued consumers are not really interested in the product that is being consumed but rather outline social connections through consumption as the key to consumption (Cova & Cova, 2002; Schembri, 2009). Harley–Davidson is more than a bike. A bike is a functional vehicle, a consumption object, yet Harley–Davidson is a resource through which consumers socialise and interact (Schembri, 2009, p1308)

Harley-Davidson offers a unique collection of groupings in which a handyman can sit together with a banker or CEO and speak the same language by sharing a common bond through the motorcycle (Herzog, 1993). It outlines the mystique that comes with the purchase of any Harley motorcycle. It is a marketing masterpiece, although

Harley-Davidson does not spend much on advertisement, it heavily relies on its mystique factor and is seen as one of the most recognisable companies worldwide.

Through a global network of Harley Riders riding together under the banner of HOGs, a friendly environment is being established. This environment offers a clear hierarchical structure in which a progression through the ranks can take place in relation to one's willingness to participate and experience. As is the case in many subcultural surroundings, a level of experience is essential to enter such circles and especially to attempt to become a member of the inner circle. This is an argument that has already been established through Celsi et al.'s analysis of the skydiving subculture (1993) and supported through Schouten and McAlexander's (1995) and Schembri's (2009) findings within the Harley-Davidson environment. "Newcomers become acutely aware of their lowly rank in this commitment-based hierarchy. Effectively, core members perform for both an internal audience (newer members) and an external audience (outsiders) whereas newer members perform as a means of transforming themselves and their status." (Schembri, 2009, p1300).

A collective understanding and admiration are established according to the effort a member commits to the hobby, such as participating in rallies or going on long rides and tours. Within the examples illustrated in Schembri's work (2009), these include travelling to annual rallies which can entail more than 300 miles per day for five days straight in order to reach their destination and the same on the return journey.

In addition to Schouten and McAlexander (1995) Schembri (2009) outlines that these rallies are not members only tours and often families travel behind the motorcycles in cars whereas others may ride with their kids as pillion which adds to a family-friendly environment and adds to possible excuses which can be made for Harley owners to commit further to the subculture of Harley-Davidson by turning a selfish consumption into a family adventure.

2.7.1.3 Understanding of Safety with the Harley-Davidson Community

Through the structures of HOG rallies, the levels of risk are minimised through the presence of safety officers who look at the driving behaviour of the riders and caution anyone who is endangering the group's safety or other road users (Schembri, 2009). Additionally, specific riding formations are utilised to reduce risks for multiple riders to be involved in a mass accident in the case of one driver losing control of his motorbike

(Schembri, 2009). This even leads to safety reasons being given within the research of Schembri (2009), that the purchase of a Harley increases awareness for a motorbike due to its high levels of noise indicating their presence, a feature which cannot be found in “riceburners” (Japanese manufactured sports motorbikes such as Honda or Yamaha) and stating “Loud pipes [exhausts] save lives” (Schembri, 2009, p1304).

Safety excuses can be found in various other parts of Harley-Davidson motorcycles which underline consumption motivation of this kind as not just the level of noise is relevant to increase other road user’s awareness of the surrounding motorcycle (Schembri, 2009) but also the element of speed. For Harley-Davidson consumers the ride itself is the experience, not the time taken, as it would be the case for sports motorbikes. As common knowledge dictates “the path is the goal”, an important piece of wisdom for Harley-Davidson consumers. Through various discounting elements, a Harley motorcycle appears to be one of the more reasonable choices to be made within the world of motorcycling.

Contrasting with this, is Harley-Davidson’s own history in which the Davidson Brothers and William Harley set out to produce the fastest and strongest motorcycle in the American market at the time (Harley and the Davidsons, 2016) and developed a strong racing pedigree (Museum, 2019). A pedigree which may be overlooked with the main consumers and their precious Harleys today. However, despite the racing history of the American company it has allowed the consumer to place a new understanding of the firm and the usability of their products.

Additionally, the sight of groups is still the cause for concern for outsiders, due to the outlaw image attached to the brand and the appearance of the riders. Even though HOG chapters are very friendly and often involved in charitable causes the sheer sight of the black vest or emblems stigmatise them into a role of outlaws (Schembri, 2009). However, there needs to be a clear distinction between outsider and insider perception as HOG members do not intend to be involved with outlaw grouping nor support them in any way and therefore do not make an association with these groupings (Schembri, 2009).

2.7.2 Consumption to Play

The focus of the internal motivation to commit to play is especially strong within the Harley-Davidson community, without any links to outlaw activities. The motivation to commit to the lifestyle of the Harley subculture opens up a new way of life and understanding of oneself in relation to a product. "Acquisition of a Harley, therefore, includes more than 100 years of glory and legend and as such can fulfil a dream for many. Consequently, investment in a Harley is more than financial and the role of the bike is more than functional (Schembri, 2009, p1304)". "While a functional but unique positioning may differentiate a brand in a competitive field, the personification of brand attributes generates brand personality (Patterson, 1999; Nagar, 2015). Personalising inanimate objects (Aaker, 1997) and humanising brands (Levy, 1985), infuses them with a distinct personality simplifying brand choice and encouraging a preference for particular brands (Sirgy, 1982)" (Schembri, 2009, p1300).

It allows consumers to access an environment that they would not be able to access through non-consumption. The intrinsic developments of the consumer are not solely focused on the purchase of the motorcycle itself, which may be influenced through various other streams of excuses, but direct a purchase intention that goes beyond the reach of the motorcycle. Some riders may not choose to be affiliated with any form of Harley rider group and remain a lone rider, but still partake of the imagery of the brand through consumption and are involved in the subculture even if indirectly.

The previously mentioned emotions experienced during the ride of the rumbling engine and the loud noises create a personal sanctuary of peacefulness. Sometimes just having a temporary getaway from social or economic pressure furthers intentions to relieve stress. Harley-Davidson offers the safer getaway possibility to the consumer, based on speed and driving characteristics.

However, Holt's theory (1995) perceives consumption as play, not through consumption itself but rather the consumption object becomes a resource for interaction (Holt, 1995; Schembri, 2009) and therefore remains and requires the deserving addition to this particular research but as one of Schembri informant stated "Harley-Davidson is an emotion and intellectualizing that takes away from what that is" (2009, p1307).

The proposed model to explain the implications of emotions in regard to hedonic consumption under risk identifies that internal reasoning, such as emotions, can be closely related to the consumer behaviour approaches of Holt (1995) and the fourth dimension. By adding this to a consumer behavioural timeline it will allow the perception of the implications of emotions to the required extent and enhances the understanding of consumer behaviour. Consumption can be influenced through external influences, but not to the extent shown in the reviewed research, as product consumption is not committed through specific product consumption but rather consumption can be motivated for participation reasons that are product specific. Not many brands offer such a strong following as Harley-Davidson and the extent this consumption can be influenced by the subculture surrounding Harley-Davidson is underappreciated. It is important to note that internal processes rather than the external influences need to be taken into consideration. As stated by one participant in Schembri's work (1995) Harley-Davidson is an emotional object hence the need to research the purchase and participation reasoning under the light of emotions.

However, one must feel an affinity towards a product type in order for this discussion of consumption to occur. This is especially an important aspect when looking at high-risk leisure activities such as skydiving and motorcycling. If a consumer does not have a positive desire to consume or to participate in such activities neither external nor internal discussion may convince him/her otherwise.

2.7.3 Motorcycle License and Acceptance of accompanying Risks

Motorcycling is a dangerous activity and is understood so by motorcyclists (Schembri, 2009), thus, it requires practice and patience and a license to be eligible to participate. Therefore, the first hindrance would be to obtain a motorcycle driving license which is a requirement within European countries, the A1 license to precise. Without a license, a discussion of purchasing a motorcycle is irrelevant as consumption cannot take place. Thus, it follows to regard people with a license and not a motorcycle as a critical group to the decision-making process. This group shows signs of affinity to motorcycling by their commitment to obtaining a motorcycle license but for various reasons have not yet purchased a motorcycle.

Since 1994, registered motorcycles increased continuously within the UK from 720.9 thousand motorcycles registered in 1994 to 1.23 million registered motorcycles in

2015 (DVLA, 2015). This constant increase in motorcycle purchases indicates a strong reason to conduct research on the leisure activity of motorcycling which appears to find more admirers annually.

As there is only a limited number of consumers eligible for the consumption of motorcycles, the brand of Harley-Davidson stands out most of all as it is one of the most recognised two-wheeler vehicle brands on the road. The affect heuristics amongst those eligible to consume motorcycles may vary immensely as personal interests differ.

However, if all the groundwork is done by obtaining a motorcycle license it will also be interesting to see when the license was obtained and the time span between the license and the purchase of the Harley. Through a prolonged time difference, three important aspects could be identified (1) a delayed transformation based on age which motivates consumption of a heavier and slower motorcycle, (2) a change in taste of motorcycle (if previous bikes have been owned), (3) an existing affection for motorcycles. This aspect will need to be covered during the interview stage of the current research.

However, something that can definitely be said about the presence of a motorcycle driving license is that it accompanies a risk-seeking attitude or at the very least an acceptance of the personal risks of motorcycling. If, then, a motorcycle has been purchased it can be seen as an indicator of the acceptance of the financial risks which come along with motorcycle consumption, even if it is only partial such as through the purchase of a second or third-hand motorcycle to utilise as a practice machine. It outlines a more risk-seeking desire than amongst non-motorcycle license holders.

The successful completion indicates a strong affection, or at the very least an affective perception towards motorcycling, however, whilst obtaining a license is one aspect the other would be to purchase a motorcycle. A general acceptance of the involved risks can be assumed (Celsi, et al., 1993), but for a consumer to fully commit to motorcycling having the state permission to ride one does not automatically make a biker out of somebody. The first hindrance has been taken by the aspiring motorcyclist, but the next step would be to obtain a motorbike that he perceives as suitable for himself.

However, the search for a motorcycle may not be completed for various reasons, which may be related to insufficient funds at the time of passing the license but wanting to have the option to purchase a motorcycle at a later stage of life without having to worry about obtaining a license first. This may also be an indication for the advanced age Harley consumers, which is 47 years of age on average (Kelleher, 2013). The interferences in purchase may include; childbirth, a new job, purchase of a bigger house, or other financially important events. This leaves the consequential argument that external influences may be working more efficiently at hindering consumption than they are at increasing consumption ideas and desires. Whilst internal affection towards motorcycle consumption is present, external influences may stop the consumption process.

It has to be argued that a motorcycle license is an indicator towards the high-risk leisure activity of motorcycling but only the purchase of a motorcycle shows actual commitment towards the hobby/sport and the most obvious indication of affection towards subcultural tendencies. A license is not obvious to external parties but the material object of a motorcycle shows one's affection very clearly. In that sense, the motorcycle industry is, amongst a select few industries, unique in its customer availability based on state-imposed regulations. Other consumption industries do not have a similar burden which hinders consumption in the way it does with license regulated industries which require either age or proven ability restrictions. Other industries can access an open market with the majority of the population having immediate access to consumption. Based on this particular argument a motorcycle owner can be seen as a restricted group due to the regulated participation selection.

As consumer numbers are restricted motorcycle manufacturers need to fight for eligible consumers. Motorcycle manufacturers offer a more distinct variation in product base in comparison to other automotive segments. It, therefore, offers an ideal area to conduct a case study for researchers as it outlines distinct taste differences and even a distinct language of disrespect towards another motorcyclist who chooses other motorcycle manufacturers. This can be seen in the previously discriminating language of "riceburners" as a descriptive term for Japanese manufactured motorcycles (Schembri, 2009). However, unlike any other manufacturer Harley-Davidson resembles a distinct subculture which outlines a

higher identification value to consumers as a unique selling point and can attract the limited available consumers through an external supporting structure.

2.7.4 Review of discussion

It can be said that external influences may be more active in the prevention of high-risk leisure activities such as motorcycling as they are in supporting them. However, it can also be argued that these influences require a high level of influence in order to compare and contrast the internal desires of possible consumers to consume to play. The subcultural structure that is in place in Harley-Davidson makes it more appealing to consumers as it offers a place of inclusion to a group which would otherwise be non-accessible through non-consumption. Whilst it is an open community not discriminating against gender, religion, or ethnicity it requires the object of the Harley in order to be allowed to enter, adding to a mysterious exclusive group and adding to the appeal of the American icon. It has been argued by Schembri (2009) that the Americanness does not add to the appeal outside of the US environment, as her research identified that consumers do not appreciate the American symbolism as much as would be assumed based on the background of Harley-Davidson. Instead consumers from non-American nations, in this particular case study Australia, add their own personal identity and national pride to their Harley consumption (Schembri, 2009). The community lives and breathes through the consumption of their product and it has been outlined that this participation offers consumers tranquillity and peace from outside problems (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Schembri, 2009). The risks involved in riding a motorcycle are well understood and measures at tours and rallies are taken to minimise them (Schembri, 2009), offering a more secure environment than other motorcycle groups may offer as it is not about the speed of the journey but rather the journey itself.

In regard to the risks that come with motorcycling, the literature review has uncovered an important point, not considered by many studies looking at risks involved in motorcycling, the requirement of a driving license. This aspect not only covers the state's permission to ride a motorcycle but also gives various important clues to risk attitude. The owner shows a clear affection towards motorcycling in the first step of the ownership of a motorcycle license which supports desires for consumption, but inherently accepts that risk, both financial and personal, are part of motorcycling.

Chapter Three – Methodology

Chapter Three- Methodology

This chapter outlines the philosophical considerations of this research which go on to inform the practical methodology. First, there is a discussion of the research paradigm which continues to the research methodologies deemed most appropriate.

3.1 Research Philosophy

The research philosophy focuses on the shared assumption within scientific research of how to address and consequently understand the matter at hand (Crotty, 1998). The research is influenced by the selection of the philosophy chosen by the researcher which will impact the outcome accordingly. Due to the strong influence the selection of a research philosophy has on the research, high-level care is demanded by the researcher in selecting an appropriate approach for the research at hand (Babbie, 2007; Clayton, 2010; Quimby, 2012).

3.1.1 Ontology

Looking at research philosophies two pathways present themselves, ontology and epistemology. Ontology is defined as, “the theory of social entities and is concerned with what there exists to be investigated” (Walliman, 2006, p15). Ontology outlines the philosophy of worldviews, existence and reality, which can also be expressed as the study of being (Durant-Law, 2005). Ontology designates the understanding of reality and what knowledge is, at its basic level two ontological beliefs can be identified, objective and subjective or constructivism (Warr, 2004).

The first mentioned option, objective, describes the perception of knowledge as measurable and always being true in whatever scenario they are placed. The main core of an objective ontology is that it “portrays the position that social entities exist in reality external to social actors concerned with their existence” (Saunders et al., 2012). Therefore, it will disregard social actors and social influences that may or may not impact the outcome. Objectivism is regarded as an impartial, unbiased, actual reality, uninfluenced by social interaction (Walliman, 2006; Bryman & Bell, 2011)

From a subjective perception of ontology, it is accepted that knowledge is what is created by individuals or groups as they interact (O'Gorman & Macintosh, 2015). Ultimately, this will impact on the ways of research being conducted and perceived. It will not be possible to generate a singular, stable and universal truth. Knowledge is

regarded as communal as knowledge and understanding are formed on a personal level depending on the individual interpretation (Bryman & Bell, 2011). This may be influenced through social interactions, culture and personal interpretations of what can be seen as true. As an example, the perception of height might be an appropriate example. Height varies across the world and different geographical locations thus the perception and judgement of a tall or short person vary accordingly. This perception of height is influenced by the norms of social interactions and differs between geographic locations. Whilst numerical data illustrates the average height within a country or region, it cannot outline what the population perceives as tall or short.

3.1.2 Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with the perception of valid truth and forms “the study or theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge especially with references to its limits and validity” (Merriam-Webster, 2019). The epistemology is closely linked to ontology as the approach to how new knowledge is established is influenced by how knowledge is conceptualised at the beginning.

The positivist approach which mostly finds its use in natural science in which its critical and objective base method is desired to generate new knowledge to create universal and generalizable laws. A positivist researcher believes that only one answer is in existence which is objectively measurable (Bryman & Bell, 2011)

Another philosophy to approach the research can be seen in the interpretivist approach. One of the main differences is that interpretivism outlines the difference between natural and social science. In natural science, a positivist researcher, attempts to find explanations for problems whilst the social scientist attempts to understand the problem at hand instead of explaining what is occurring and that physical systems cannot react to predictions made about them instead social systems possess that ability to adapt to predictions as Max Weber argued. Interpretivism outlines that each individual is responsible for his or her personal understanding, which leads to a multiple interpretational environment. It necessarily follows that the realisation of subject meanings plays an important aspect in social actions (Walliman, 2006).

People’s interpretations will guide their behaviour accordingly (Saunders et al., 2012), it is important that the researcher studies participants from close proximity (Creswell,

2014), this will assist in establishing a subjective meaning of the social action (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Within the philosophy of interpretivism, it is the people's understanding that is guiding the research to create knowledge, these researches focus on the way people do things and how, what specific purpose these activities serve, and what the meaning of these activities are to the participant (Bailey, 2007). On the other hand, empiricism follows that knowledge is gained from various pathways, such as sensory or physical experiences (Walliman, 2006).

When focusing on consumer behaviour and how consumption is conducted amongst Harley-Davidson owners it has a large impact to focus on the personal understanding of the participants from their personal interpretivist perspective.

3.1.3 Axiology

The focus of ontology and epistemology lies in the nature of reality and what knowledge is, axiology is the philosophy that is concerned with the roles of values and ethics (Saunders et al., 2012). The researcher will be impacted by their own personal beliefs and values (Durant-Law, 2005; Ponteretto, 2005; Saunders et al., 2007; Flowers, 2009). One's actions are steered by one's values and beliefs. Therefore, it is necessary that decisions made by the researcher are clarified in order for the axiological skills to become obvious to the reader (Ponteretto, 2005).

Axiology allows the reader to understand whether the researcher conducting the research predicts the world or simply seeks to make sense of it (Lee & Lings, 2008; Fejszes, 2017). With the focus of conducting research on the Harley-Davidson community and their purchase intentions, this research will report on the findings. Reporting on these will ensure its authenticity and add credibility to the research at hand. In order to limit the impact of the researchers own beliefs, it is advised that an in-depth investigation take place by which to understand the research subject (Lee & Lings, 2008; Creswell, 2009).

3.2 The Qualitative Interpretivist Approach

After examining the various pathways this research can take it has been determined that the interpretivist approach will be used for the current research, which uses qualitative research methods. This corresponds closely to the previously discussed

aspects of ontology, epistemology, and axiology. It further corresponds with previous research conducted within social environments, such as the subculture of Harley-Davidson. Based on the specific topic at hand qualitative research allows the researcher an in-depth investigation of consumer behaviour, which is not just advisable but also appears to be the most suitable (Lee & Lings, 2008; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Creswell, 2014). The experiences of the individual participants and potential influences are best examined in a qualitative manner (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Saunders et al., 2012). The use of quantitative methods is not advisable as specific details of consumption motivation may not be suitably reflected through surveys and a statistical analysis. This perception corresponds closely to the interpretivist's belief which focuses on the participants close personal interpretation and perception (Crotty, 1998).

As established earlier, qualitative methods allow the researcher to achieve the required depth, whereas a focus on quantitative methods offer more breadth (Blaxter, 2010). This will serve to understand the intricate behaviour of hedonic consumption in more detail. The research will also be conducted in its natural setting, in this case, the Harley-Davidson dealership, which will reduce the possibilities that participants are manipulated (Skinner et al., 2000; Gillham, 2000; Golafshani, 2003; Ponteretto, 2005). The aim is less to measure and assess, but rather to ask questions that may require reflection and insight of the participant (Lapan et al., 2012), which will increase understanding of the consumer behaviour.

Due to the subjectivity of the participants understanding of the community of Harley-Davidson they will each add meaning to their own world based on their previous personal experiences (Labuschagne, 2003; Walliman, 2006). This closely correlates with the subjective understanding of the ontological and ethnographic interpretivists and constructivist paradigms. The use of quantitative methods are not feasible for the research as this statically expressional manner does not fairly represent the underlying issues to be understood in social science (Babbie, 2007; Punch, 2014). Qualitative research will facilitate finding the communal view and understanding which is closely linked to each individual's personal opinion and understanding (Gilbert, 2008; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

3.3 Qualitative Research Methods

As outlined in table 3.1, under qualitative research various strategies can be identified for data collection processes as illustrated in the table below:

Qualitative Research Strategy	Description
Case Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Researcher explores in depth a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals- Detailed information collection using a variety of data collection processes over a sustained period of time
Ethnography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Researcher studies an intact cultural group in a natural setting over a prolonged period of time- Primarily observational and interview data
Grounded Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Researcher derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants
Narrative	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Researcher studies lives of individuals and asks one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives- Often retold by the researcher into a narrative chronology
Phenomenology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Researcher identifies the essence of human experiences about a phenomenon as described by participants in study

Table 3.1: Qualitative Research Methods (Creswell, 2014)

The research aim is to identify consumer behaviour in regard to middle-aged men purchasing Harley-Davidson. As seen in the table above a variety of qualitative approaches can be taken. The selection process will be through elimination until a suitable approach is found.

Grounded theory does not appear to be appropriate for the research at hand as its primary aim is to identify a new theory and find practices with the use of that theory (Seale, 2004; Gilbert, 2008). Since the research aims to understand consumption in more detail it does not require a new theory to do so. Narrative research could be an interesting approach to this research as it focuses on the stories told by the participants, this especially comes into play when looking at experiences with the brand of Harley-Davidson. However, its focus would be too small to take into

consideration a wider range of consumers not just “one or more individuals to provide stories about their lives” (Creswell, 2009, p231).

Phenomenological approaches can be seen as relevant to the research at hand as it outlines “experiences about a phenomenon as described by the participant” (Creswell, 2009, p231), it focuses on a smaller group in greater detail which will allow theory to be built (Lester, 2001; Fejszes, 2017). It furthermore “studies the structures of meanings and focuses on the lived experiences of people in relation to the common phenomenon that they all experience” (Fejszes, 2017, p97; Patton, 2002).

Previous research has relied on ethnographic research as it can be seen in the examples of Schouten and McAlexander (1995), and also in Schembri’s research (2009). Ethnographic research is time-consuming and may exceed time scheduling for the PhD process and increase costs significantly. Furthermore, access to an appropriate community needs to be secured. The best possible starting point would be the Harley-Davidson Owner Group. However, based on the personal experiences of the researcher this only covers a small number of Harley-Davidson consumers and a variety of consumers would not participate in the research. Previous research such as Schembri (2009) has used the Harley-Davidson Owner Group as a main source of information. Whilst it may appear to be a logical approach to the research it only allows access to one particular group. Not every Harley-Davidson consumer is part of the Harley-Davidson Owner Group or a Motorcycle club. Through the approach that has been selected, by conducting interviews with participants in the Harley-Davidson dealership, access to a wider variety of Harley-Davidson consumers is achieved, including Harley-Davidson consumers with or without club affiliation.

Whilst ethnographic research has advantages in gathering a large amount of data over a prolonged period of time this approach was not deemed suitable for this particular research based on time constraints on the researcher’s behalf. As it has been established the ethnographic approach allows the researcher to observe through participation in the community to a certain extent, this includes communicating with other participants of the community through asking, watching and listening (Dunne et al., 2005). Therefore, it is excluded as a potential strategy for the qualitative data gathering process.

The remaining possibility for the research would be to focus on the data collection process with a case study strategy. Case studies facilitate interaction with participants

which would not be possible from the observer position that ethnographic approaches would represent (Gillham, 2000; Swanborn, 2010).

Assistance in solving the research problem at hand can be found in the research methodology (Gillham, 2000; Kothari, 2009; Blaxter, 2010). This will be reflected through the selection of appropriate ontological and epistemological perspectives to facilitate the process of finding out what has yet not been discovered (Babbie, 2007; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Robson, 2011). Key components and terminology are illustrated in the following figure:

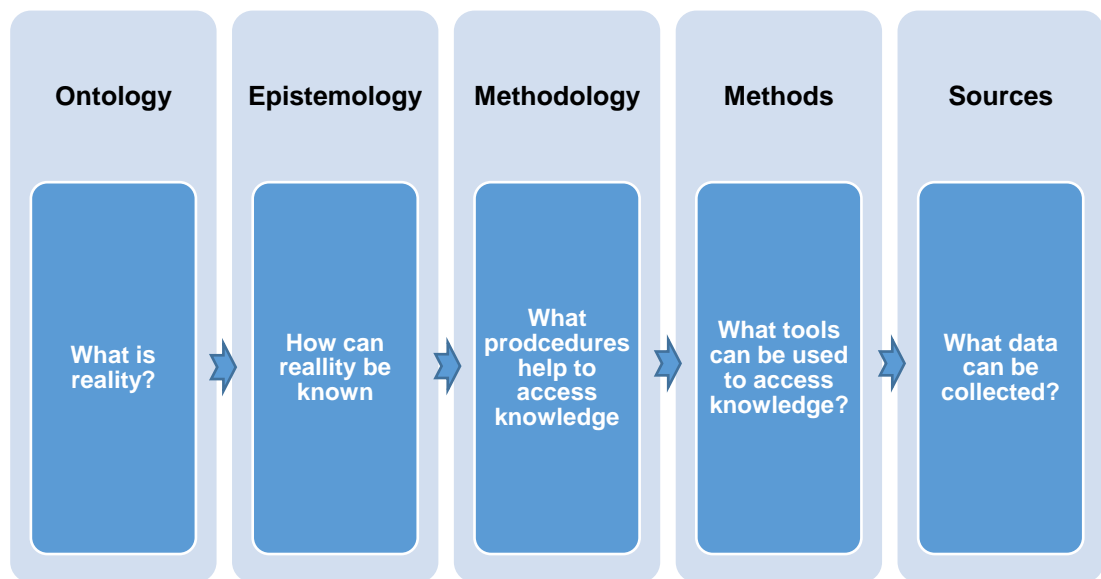


Figure 3.1: Methodological Approach (Crotty, 1998)

Two main methodological approaches can be identified, qualitative and quantitative. A third option, the mixed methods approach, needs to be considered which is a combination of these two methodologies (Creswell, 2009). The following table can assist in determining a suitable methodological approach for the research at hand.

View/ Supposition		Ontology	Epistemology	Axiology	Methodology
Research Paradigm	Aim	Nature of Reality	Relationship of Researcher	Role Value	Research Process
Quantitative	To explain and predict	Objective	Independent Researcher from what is being researched	Value free and unbiased	Deductive
				Values are outside the scientific inquiry	Cause and effect
					Context free
Qualitative	To understand and interpret	Reality is subjective and multiple	Research interacts with what is being researched	Biased	Inductive
	To critique and identify potential			Values vary individually and in need to be understood	Evolving design
					Context bound
Mixed Methods	Finding answers by taking multiple approaches	The study has objective and subjective elements	The researcher is independent and also interactive during different parts of the research	Research biases to be eliminated by the use of different methods	Collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative forms of data in a single study

Table 3.2: Methodological Approach Adapted from Creswell (2014)

3.4 Methodological Approach

3.4.1 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research, as the name suggests, concentrates on quantifiable approaches, it, therefore, focusses on measurability, statistics, and objectiveness

(Punch, 2014; Saunders et al., 2012). Its origins are deeply embedded in objectivism and positivism. It is predominantly used in natural science, including mathematics, to assist with proving or disproving hypotheses (Labuschagne, 2003; Creswell, 2014). However, an application for quantitative research can also be found within social sciences, this application can often be met when social phenomena exist independently from social actors and can be studied from an objective standpoint (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Anderson, 2013).

Quantitative research often utilises surveys in order to gather its information. These are often simple to conduct and require little time involvement by the researcher as surveys can be easily distributed and its results can be analysed in a similar swift manner (Labuschagne, 2003; Neuman, 2011). Due to the simple manner of distribution, a large number of participants can be acquired and used accordingly. The results can then be expressed in a statistical manner through hard figures, the outcomes are of an objective and accurate nature. Since personal bias by the researcher is avoided these results can be considered provable, it necessarily follows that the results are replicable for future research (Babbie, 2007).

Whilst this may be beneficial, quantitative research also has certain disadvantages. This is in regard to the depth that it can identify, whilst it is possible to achieve a replicable result to test a hypothesis it is also likely that specific background elements are being missed (Creswell, 2009). A survey, as it is often used in quantitative research, is not flexible and questions cannot be adjusted or clarified (Babbie, 2007; Neuman, 2011). The researcher's opinions can potentially be reflected by the questions and the manner in which they are asked if the survey is simplistic. A lack of understanding, due to no researcher being present during the time a questionnaire is filled out, can lead to problems for the participant. Additionally, low survey returns need to be considered since participants are not personally approached (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Due to these disadvantages, often, quantitative research does not discover motives and behavioural traits (Fejszes, 2017).

3.4.2 Qualitative Research

From an ontological perspective, the origins of qualitative research can be found within constructivism and the importance of direct experiences (Saunders et al., 2012). It allows for a subjective perspective by accepting that knowledge and reality

are constructed on a social level (Anderson, 2013; Creswell, 2014). Whilst in quantitative research the underlying background is not processed, qualitative research focuses predominantly on this underlying reasoning by investigating the concept, meanings, and behaviour. It is not possible to quantify these aspects on scales or other quantitative measurements (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, Phillimore & Goodson, 2004). Sciences that concentrate on human behaviour benefit from the use of qualitative research methods (Kothari, 2009).

As previously established, quantitative research methods focus on a deductive approach which means that it leads to hypothesis-testing where qualitative research is from an inductive approach outlining a hypothesis-generating perspective (Blaxter, 2010; Holloway & Brown, 2012, Holloway, 2013). This benefits the flexibility with which the data collection occurs. The participants determine the speed at which the data collection is conducted, which allows for further clarification which would not be possible under quantitative research.

Fewer participants will be involved in qualitative research as data collection is more time-consuming (Silverman, 2009; Robson, 2011). Based on the nature of face to face interviews, the researcher accesses rich masses of data on the participant's views and experiences. This immersion in the participants understanding further strengthens the likelihood of understanding the participant in far greater detail (Anderson, 2013) than it would have been possible with quantitative data collection processes.

As with quantitative research there are weaknesses within qualitative research, often arising in the same way as the strengths (Patton, 2002; Packer, 2011; Anderson, 2013). An example of is the hands on nature of qualitative research. The researcher needs to reduce personal influence as far as possible to reduce personal bias. Additionally, a challenge to qualitative research is the consistency of the researcher for all participants throughout the data collection process (Norris, 1997; Fejszes, 2017). Furthermore, whilst it is beneficial to have a large mass of data to understand the issue at hand, data analysis may be challenging based on the richness and high volume of data (Gilbert, 2008; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Whilst quantitative research allows for a level of replicability this is less true for qualitative research (Norris, 1997; Fejszes, 2017).

3.4.3 Mixed Methods

The mixed methods approach allows the researcher to gather information in both quantitative and qualitative forms (Creswell, 2014). This means that key attributes of each will be used, from the traditional quantitative methods for example surveys in combination with qualitative methods such as interviews and observational research (Neuman, 2011), this will assist in removing limitations solely relying on one singular method. Furthermore, data validation can be conducted from various perspectives rather than just one. If a suitable application for mixed methods is found it will facilitate discovering a large amount of data which will increase the overall knowledge.

Whilst this may appear to be an interesting method to use it is also possible that challenges can emerge in relation to matching one method to the other which may hinder the understanding of the data (Saunders et al., 2012). Furthermore, the application of mixed methods and the resulting analyses is time-consuming and highly resource intensive. Care when using this method is advised as the researcher needs to be confident in both research methods to understand the complex nature of the mixed methods approach.

The following table illustrates aspects of these three research methods:

Quantitative Methods	Qualitative Methods	Mixed Methods
Experimental research design Non-experimental research design (surveys)	Narrative Phenomenology Ethnography Case Study Grounded Theory	Convergent Explanatory sequential Exploratory sequential Transformative, embedded, or multiphase

Table 3.3: Comparison different methods (Creswell, 2009, p12)

3.5 The Case Study Research Approach

Case studies are commonly used to explore, explain and understand the researched concept within its natural environment (Fejszes, 2017), which allows the researcher to gather a deeper understanding of the researched topic and its real-life setting (Rowley, 2002). Since this research relies on the Harley-Davidson consumer and to

identify their purchase intentions it appears to be highly appropriate to conduct the research from a case study approach in which the consumer remains in its natural habitat, in this case, the Harley-Davidson dealership.

It is further strengthened as case studies focus on questions such as “Why?” or “How?” within a non-controlled, natural setting that reflect the actual situation of the real-life examples of a locality on a micro level (Gillham, 2000; Rowley, 2002; Yin, 2009; Fejszes, 2017). Case studies have been criticised for their subjective nature, as outlined by Rowley (2002). However, it has also been noted that the data that is being collected is unique and may represent findings that would otherwise have not been uncovered (Rowley, 2002).

Case studies use in-depth conversations as a means to gather insight into a group. Specifically, participants own perceptions can be compared and contrasted to other participants of the study which will assist if a mutual understanding is in place amongst participants (Rowley, 2002). Through the selection of a larger participant group a deeper understanding of the topic is generated and the collected data will facilitate a greater understanding of the purchase intentions of middle-aged men buying a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. Case studies assist in creating a thorough understanding of the research matter (Silverman, 2009).

Case studies represent various challenges to the researcher. Hard work is involved in the process which is time-consuming (Yin, 2009). It also needs to be highly precise in identifying a community which is often seen as a problematic hurdle which the researcher needs to overcome (Quimby, 2012). However, in this particular case, the subcultural community identifies itself by being present at the local Harley-Davidson dealership. This will eliminate the impact of identifying the community significantly.

Case study interviews can be conducted by interviewing one participant at a time or by participants coming together in a focus group (Frey & Fontana, 1993; Gilbert, 2008). Focus groups can be beneficial in terms of understanding the views of a community whilst also increasing the knowledge of underlying issues that may be in place (Waterton & Wynne, 1999). Focus groups have several benefits, such as being time effective due to many participants being reached in one time, the participants may feel relaxed due to the open environment they are taking part in, generating rich data, participants often share their thoughts and views, or raise disagreement with what has been mentioned in the discussion (Steward & Shamdasani, 1990; Frey &

Fontana, 1993; Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999; Gilbert, 2008). However, it also needs to be argued that due to the variety of participants the resulting data analysis may be problematic (Frankland & Bloor, 1999). Due to the nature of this research, it has been decided to focus predominantly on individual interviews whilst allowing a second party to be present at the time of the interview, such as the partner, which may result in more detailed data.

3.6 Case study in practice

Case studies are a well-established approach within qualitative consumer behaviour research and examples can be found in a variety of researches, including Holt and Thompson (2004). Social research is often relying on case study research due to their in-depth knowledge of the researched case. Whilst a more common approach within hedonic research outlines an ethnographic approach; examples can be found from Celsi et al. (1993), Schouten and McAlexander (1995), and Schembri (2009). It has been decided to use a case study as the method for this research, this would identify the data required within a limited time span. It further allows to explore purchase intentions, as opposed to a much wider ethnographic approach that considers behaviour within specific groups.

The case study approach selected for this research will allow a focus on a community, the community of Harley-Davidson consumers. The insights of the consumers and subsequently of the non-consumers build the data collection for the research allowing for new knowledge and understanding to be developed (Gillham, 2000; Quimby, 2012). According to Yin (2014, p15) a case study is “still a case study when more than one case is included in the same study”, he further outlines that if the research is focused on the “why” a multiple case study is appropriate to select (Yin, 2014). Through a form of a comparative case study the two different groups are utilised to form a greater understanding of the consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. The insider, the Harley-Davidson consumer, and the outsider, the non-motorcyclist, give different perspectives of the involved elements. This includes the risk perception and the different perception of the consumption object from the two clusters.

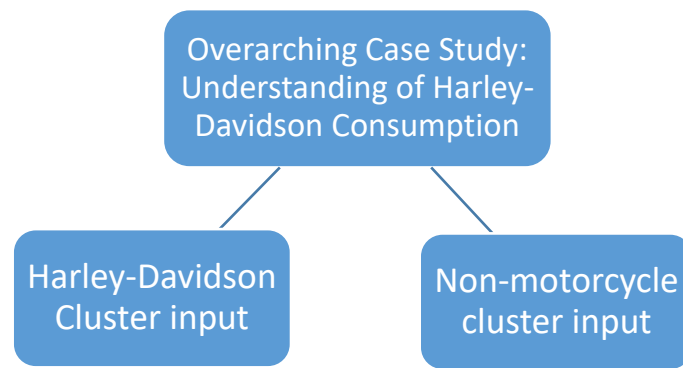


Figure 3.2: Cluster input to Case Study

In order for the validity and reliability to be optimal the researcher obtained the data from the areas in which Harley-Davidson consumers were most easily found. The interviews took place in the Harley-Davidson dealership in Edinburgh, Scotland.

During the literature review phase of the research (late 2015 to 2016) the researcher got in touch not just with the Harley-Davidson dealership in Edinburgh but also with Harley-Davidson headquarters for the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) market. Through those communications, it became apparent that the selection of the gender and age specifications are very accurate to Harley-Davidson's consumer base. Through the support and information provided by Harley-Davidson confidence within this research has been strengthened. Additionally, it also became apparent that the selection of qualitative research methods is the accurate approach in order to capture the motivations for this particular consumption which otherwise would not have been able to be captured accordingly.

3.6.1 The insider researcher: Axiology in action

The position that the researcher finds himself in is very important as he is not only the collector of the data but also the analyser of the data (Silverman, 2009; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). The researcher can either be an insider or an outsider researcher (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009; Fejszes, 2017). Whilst the researcher has some experience with the Harley-Davidson community he was not connected to the

researched community of Scottish Harley-Davidson consumers prior to this research. Therefore, it can be argued that he is still an outsider as his only participation within the researched community was during the period of the interviews and not as an active member of the Edinburgh based Harley-Davidson environment. Insider research can often generate results which are more credible and more dedicated to the subject area (Brannick & Coghlan, 2007; Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) However, it also has disadvantages as the researcher might find himself caught between the population of the community and the research. In this case, the outside researcher would have a more objective perspective of the area of study (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

Regardless of the position of the researcher, as insider or outsider, objectivity must remain intact (Saunders et al., 2012) and is essential for remaining unbiased. The researcher must attempt to regard the problem at hand with an open mind as if he knows nothing about the problem during the data gathering phase of the research (Van Heugten, 2004; Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009).

3.7 Research Sampling

As it would be impossible to gather information from the whole population of Harley-Davidson consumers it is necessary to focus on smaller parts of the population in a process called sampling (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Saunders et al., 2012). Due to the reason that this research requires finding deeper knowledge and insight or contextual knowledge, which allowed the collected data to be used for the research (Wengraf, 2002; Qu & Dumay, 2011; Fejszes, 2017). For this research, it has been chosen to sample in accordance with the purposive sampling process. The results that the participation within this research was not made available for anyone but required specific criteria to be fulfilled with the required knowledge of the study (Walliman, 2006; Babbie, 2007).

It was decided to utilise two clusters for the research. One cluster for the Harley-Davidson consumers within the previously specified age limits of 40-60 years and the gender specification based on male consumers. The data collection for this cluster was conducted at the local Harley-Davidson dealership in Edinburgh, Scotland. During this process, the researcher placed himself in the Café section of the Dealership and approached potential participants. This would not only allow for a

relaxed environment in which the participant can participate in the interview but also decreased the impact the researcher had on the day-to-day activities within the dealership. 24 participants have been selected for the research.

The selection of conducting the interviews in Edinburgh was not based on an aspect of convenience to the researcher but also represented 50% of Harley-Davidson dealerships in Scotland. Using the dealership rather than a motorcycle group, such as the Harley-Davidson Owner group as Schembri (2009) examined, allowed for a broader range of participants to be interviewed. This ranged from members of clubs but also included non-affiliated motorcyclists, which can be seen as an extension to the research conducted by Schouten and McAlexander (1995) and Schembri (2009).

Additionally, the argument that within the dealership of Edinburgh only residents of Edinburgh can be found is false due to a mixing of all Harley-Davidson consumers' backgrounds from various locations. Through a visit to other Harley-Davidson dealerships in Scotland, located in Glasgow, this particular argument was strengthened as the researcher re-encountered two participants from the Edinburgh dealership in the different location of Glasgow. During the interview phase this reach was further extended as one participant (Participant 7) visited the Harley-Davidson dealership in Edinburgh on his travels from India.

Conducting the interviews in a dealership has been productive for accessing a variety of Harley-Davidson consumers. Not just from Edinburgh, but also other geographical location, and not just consumers belonging to a Harley-Davidson motorcycle club but rather a variety of affiliated and non-affiliated motorcyclists.

For the non-motorcycle cluster, the researcher focused on his personal sports club. The gender and age specifications were kept the same and only the aspect of motorcycle ownership altered, members of this cluster were non-motorcyclists at the time of the interview. Selecting non-motorcyclists as the opposing cluster to the Harley-Davidson consumer gave the opportunity to gather an outsider perspective of the Harley-Davidson brand and understand what else consumers spend their money and time on if they do not own a Harley-Davidson.

This particular cluster is seen as a self-standing cluster that illustrates their perspective about Harley-Davidson and motorcycling overall. This cluster also outlined particular consumption patterns that may be compared to the Harley-Davidson cluster in terms of their personal hedonic consumption. Particular elements

were desired to be obtained. This includes the risk perception of the non-users. Within the non-motorcycle cluster, the key features included not just the age and gender but also motorcycle ownership or in this case non-motorcycle ownership. This cluster included participants who are former motorcyclists, participants who have an appreciation for motorcycling but do not intend to risk it by riding a motorcycle, participants who do not like motorcycling, and participants who do not have any opinion on motorcycling. The common trait amongst those participants is that they do not own a motorcycle at the time of the interview.

The purpose of this cluster was to offer a perspective of the majority of the UK population. This argument is based on the information provided by the DVLA that 1,270,216 motorcycles (DVLA, 2016) are registered in the United Kingdom. Clearly, motorcycling is a popular, though decidedly, minority interest and this cluster offers some views and perceptions from a majority group of the UK population. Whilst it would have been possible to increase the sample size of this particular cluster, it was decided by the researcher to keep the number of participants the same to increase the comparability between the two clusters.

Furthermore, to enter the researcher's personal sports club allowed for the participants with an active lifestyle, both physically and socially. Participants with whom the researcher had no prior connections were selected in order to reduce bias in the interview process.

3.8 Research Methods

It was decided that the most effective manner of conducting the research in this particular element was through face-to-face interviews for both clusters. The interviews for the Harley-Davidson cluster were conducted at the Harley-Davidson Dealership in Edinburgh. The interviews for the non-motorcycle cluster were conducted at the clubhouse of Grange, at the home of the participant, or in one case at the workplace of the participant.

Prior to the interviews, each participant in each cluster was given an information sheet to read and a consent form to sign in order to agree to participate in the research in accordance to Queen Margaret University Research Ethics Guidelines, Procedures and Regulations, 2011. The appendices contain the University ethical approval for

this research (Appendix 7.1) and examples of the questions used (Appendix 9.2 for Harley-Davidson Cluster and Appendix 7.3 for Non-motorcycle cluster).

For the Harley-Davidson cluster the most appropriate days to conduct the data collection at the Harley-Davidson dealership in Edinburgh were Saturdays and Sundays. This was also advised by the dealership owner and corroborated by information from Google. A total of 10 days, over 5 weekends, were used to collect the data from Harley-Davidson consumers. The spreading out of the interviews was effective as the researcher was able to gather information from a variety of people and not just one particular group of friends.

The information received from the non-motorcycle cluster was obtained over a longer period of time. This was based on the availability of participants fitting the specifications for this study and the referral system in place that allowed a larger variety of participants to be included. A total of 18 days were used to obtain the data from the non-motorcycle cluster.

The length of the interview varied depending on the participant's responses and details provided and have been recorded with the use of a Dictaphone.

For their time the participants were compensated with a £10 voucher for Harley-Davidson for the Harley-Davidson cluster and £10 cash for the non-motorcyclist cluster. The idea originated from the researcher to further strengthen the support of the Harley-Davidson dealership which was successful. In order to give the participants a fair and equal treatment the non-motorcyclists were given £10 in cash in order to motivate them to participate. All Harley-Davidson participants accepted the gift voucher. 6 participants of the non-motorcyclist cluster refused to accept the money despite the researcher insisting.

Whilst it would have been more cost effective to not use monetary incentives to participate, it enhanced the data gathering process. It was not a reward for the participation but rather a compensation for the time that the participant has taken out of his schedule to take part in the study. Ethical approval was granted with the knowledge of the monetary incentives being given to the participants. As it has been argued by Yu et al. (2017, p1) "an incentive offer could be particularly useful near the end of data collection period when an immediate boost in response rate is needed". Additionally, "the \$10 incentive offer was useful in encouraging initially reluctant participants" as it has been outlined in the research of Yu et al. (2017, p1).

3.8.1 Interviewing

For this particular research, in-depth interviews were selected which facilitate the process of generating a better understanding of the environment and may have the strength to lead changes (Wengraf, 2002; Fejszes, 2017). In this case, it would be to generate a better understanding of the subculture of Harley-Davidson and to identify motivations for this particular consumption.

The Non-Motorcyclists cluster potential participants have been approached by the researcher within his personal sports club. This allowed for a variety of participants with an active social life who are also physically active. This aspect is important in order to create a cluster that is similar in age and social life and participating in an active leisure activity.

Overall 48 participants were willing to participate in the research, as follows:

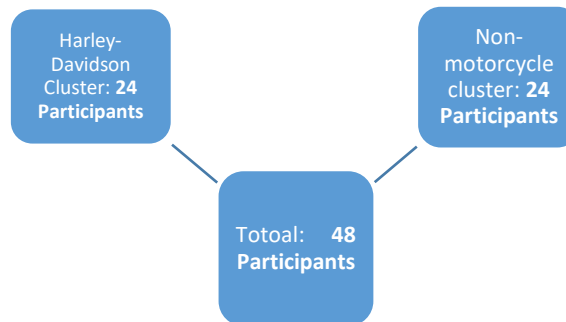


Figure 3.3: Cluster distribution

Prior to the interview commencing the participants were given an information sheet and a consent form (Appendix 7.4). After the participants read the information sheet they were asked if they had read and understood the information provided and if they had any further questions prior to the interview. They were also informed that they could withdraw at any stage without giving an explanation. No participant refused or withdrew from the study. They were presented with a consent form (Appendix 9.5) which they were asked to sign. The signed consent forms were collected and stored securely by the researcher. All participants accepted the audio recording of the interview.

For the face-to-face interviews, there were a variety of options in which the interview could be conducted. Three variety were established from the previous literature that allowed an interview to be conducted; structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

Interview Type	What does it entail?	Advantages	Disadvantages
Structured	Structured Questionnaire with a list of questions	Quick and easily completed.	Does not allow for follow up questions. Limits the opportunity for participant to expand on answers
Semi-Structured	Key questions guide the interview	Allows for flexibility for the interviewer according to the interview process	Time consuming
Unstructured	Questions are not permitted. Similar to an everyday conversation with similar flow	Allows for data collection with little knowledge which may offer a different perspective to the area of study	Time consuming. Offers challenges for the interviewer and may be confusing for the interviewee.

Table 3.4: Interview structures adapted from (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009)

This research selected a semi-structured interview approach which supports an in-depth investigation to discover as much information as possible (Waterton & Wynne, 1999; Fejszes, 2017). Whilst a variety of questions have been set out it allows the researcher to deviate from the set questions in order to allow the interviewee to elaborate on previous points and leave space for open discussions (Silverman, 2009; Stake, 2010; Packer, 2011). This allows a more detailed data collection and, in fact, it often resulted that more details came to light in the discussion once the interview questions were completed. The open-ended questions within a freestyle conversation further strengthened the discussion between the participant and interviewee which led to a more in-depth understanding (Atkinson, 1998; Mack et al., 2005; Silverman, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011).

For the non-motorcycle cluster the challenge was to discuss a topic that they are potentially not interested in talking about and have limited knowledge of the field of motorcycling. However, the participants of that cluster attempted to give as much detail as they could despite their lack of knowledge and experience. During the interview phase the non-motorcycle cluster participants were asked several questions that would require reflection and imagination on their side.

Interviewing was continued for the Harley-Davidson cluster until saturation was reached. This is achieved once no new information emerges and when the data only repeats itself (Silverman, 2009; Kumar, 2011). Whilst it is challenging to capture the motivation for every single Harley-Davidson consumer it was experienced that saturation was reached based on the fact that no new participants emerged that could contribute to the research at the Harley-Davidson dealership.

The same number of participants was achieved for the two clusters to facilitate a comparison. It is also felt that saturation was achieved for the non-motorcycle cluster as reoccurring themes emerged from the data collection.

Saturation is of a subjective nature and is decided by the researcher himself at which point it has been reached (Kumar, 2011) after which further data collection would not prove fruitful to the research at hand (Baker & Edwards, 2012).

3.9 Data Analysis

After the data collection process was completed, the next step was to commence with the analysis of the data. This required a detailed transcription of the collected data so that it could be used according to future steps. The collected data, including voice recordings and transcripts was under the researcher's control and safely stored until the completion of the research. This qualitative research was time-consuming as all of the 48 participants perspectives needed to be transcribed and understood and revisited in order to establish any recurring themes that would assist the successful completion of the research. The success of this analysis depends on the researcher (May, 2011) and his ability to appropriately establish reoccurring themes provided by the variety of participants. The target was to identify patterns, themes and codes within the data that had previously been collected through a thematic analysis of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Saldana, 2009; Quimby, 2012).

Prior to transcription programs such as Dragon Naturally Speaking software were considered, as they reduce the time for the transcription process. Such software was not used for two main reasons. The first one was that the data takes up an important position within the research so requires expertise to support a successful completion of the PhD program and secondly due to background noise the program would not be able to fulfil the task as well the researcher. Based on this the researcher transcribed using Windows Media Player and Word 2013. This process involved listening and often several times repeating segments in order to identify the exact words used within the interview. Whilst time consuming it was worthwhile for the research in itself and already assisted with a fruitful pattern identification.

As established earlier in this segment the researcher utilised a thematic analysis of the data to identify patterns and themes. Thematic analysis is often used when using a large amount of data (Boyatzis, 1998; Burnard et al., 2008), which was the case for this research. A theme is seen as information that is related to the research at hand and is usually repeated throughout the interviews and reflection of the participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For this particular research, the program NVivo 11 was used to assist with the qualitative data analysis and the establishment of reoccurring themes. It is important to note, that Nvivo does not automatically analyse the data itself but rather offers tools for the analysis process (Gibbs, 2002). With the assistance of Nvivo word frequency was used to categorise fragments of interviews by the individual clusters. Through this approach, it was facilitated to find reoccurring themes of certain keywords. Through the appropriate coding process patterns emerged that were significant for the research. Coding, whilst time-consuming, was an important approach to the data analysis that required rigour and coherent transcription be effective (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Silverman, 2009).

3.9.1 Presentation of findings

The presentation of the research findings can be conducted in two possible ways, the first one is through a combination of the findings and the discussion or through a separation based on the two (Holloway & Brown, 2012). However, based on the large number of various themes and patterns that emerged from the data analysis it was decided to approach the findings and discussion chapters from a separate

perspective. This allows for the various aspects to be appropriately mentioned before entering the discussion that is used in combination with the findings and the previously discussed literature. Through this approach the participants contributed to the research will be adequately presented and various aspects highlighted.

3.10 Qualitative research and reliability, validity, generalisability, and replicability

Reliability, validity, generalisability, and replicability are terms which, according to literature focusing on qualitative research, can have different meanings (Patton, 2002; Golafshani, 2003; Noble & Smith, 2015; Fejszes, 2017). It is important to obtain rich, precise, real and descriptive data, which will aid the process to an understandable and good quality study (Seale, 1999; Robson, 2002; Fejszes, 2017).

3.10.1 Reliability

For research to be reliable requires confidence in the data (Long & Johnson, 2007; Fejszes, 2017). This confidence in the data is based on the results' truthfulness in representing the population being examined (Golafshani, 2003). However, whilst it is aimed to present a reliable research it is near to impossible to prove reliability (Golafshani, 2003; Long & Johnson, 2007), this argument is based on the complexity of the large number of various types of data collected.

However, in order to present a reliable research, it is possible to indicate this through a consistent research and data collection and analysis (Seale, 1999). Ultimately other terms are building the basis for a reliable research to be carried. These terms are consistency, credibility, transferability and applicability and need to be regarded as central traits within qualitative research (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Golafshani, 2003; Fejszes, 2017). In order to fulfil these requirements, the role of the researcher is central, as he must demonstrate a variety of skills throughout the research and the data collection. The researcher needs to be vigilant, efficient, organised, and rigorous throughout the process (Fejszes, 2017).

3.10.2 Validity

Often the previously mentioned terms of reliability and validity can be interlinked as one cannot be present without the other (Patton, 2002). Validity is the indication of correct methods and approaches used throughout this research which will support the findings of the study as it is an honest and truthful representation of the collected data (Noble & Smith, 2015). Validity is a researcher dependent approach as the researcher's skills determine the validity of the research. However, whilst hard work, discipline, and knowledge are key factors to support this (Labuschagne, 2003; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009) it does not automatically lead to a valid research (Norris, 1997). In order for the research to increase in validity, the researcher must limit the threats to it during the data collection process. The threat is decreased by relying on the collected data and giving an appropriate representation of the data within the data analysis process as all assumptions and statements are based around the collected data through an evidential support (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Fejszes, 2017).

Validity is divided in internal and external validity. Internal validity represents the aspect of how well a research is conducted. Consistency can be seen as a supporting system to ensure the required validity is present throughout the research (Golafshani, 2003; Fejszes, 2017). The validity was additionally increased through the number of participants taking part within the research. All participants answered important questions which guided the interview and enhanced the research accuracy accordingly (Silverman, 2009; Saunders et al., 2012)

The other aspect of external validity is in close relation to the previously discussed aspect of generalisability. While "generalisability is a quality which means that findings can be measured or tested or checked by applying findings from one setting to another" (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Fejszes, 2017, p121) external validity or transferability is a procedure. Ultimately, it is in relation to the reader rather than the researcher in which the reader attempts to link the discussed findings to other settings within detailed surroundings. This will enhance the external validity and also the research applicability to other areas and other contexts (Seale, 2004; Shenton, 2004; Fejszes, 2017). This approach has been attempted through the data analysis in which the participants' statements have been delivered coherently which may allow the reader to compare issues raised in other segments and scenarios.

3.10.3 Generalisability

Whilst it has been argued in the literature that generalisability is not applicable within the settings of qualitative research, as generalisability is one of the main focus points of quantitative research (Wengraf, 2002; Clayton, 2010). Generalisability is not a main concern for qualitative research which is focused on the situation currently being researched and so limits the number of ways it could be replicated in the future. It is more concerned with the particularities of a specific scenario rather than to establish a generalizable understanding (Stake, 2010). However, it does need to focus on wider significance in which the current understanding of the research setting is understood and through which it is enhanced (Mason, 1996).

Rather than a generalizable approach, it can be argued that the research focus offers a way in which the bigger picture can be better understood (Seale, 1999; Fejszes, 2017). However, it has often been argued that this approach to generalisability cannot be undertaken in a one-off case (Quimby, 2012).

This research focuses on the Harley-Davidson consumers from Edinburgh and a change in surroundings by conducting a similar research in another part of Europe or the world may yield different outcomes. However, some of the results and arguments may still be valid and relevant in other areas (Quimby, 2012).

3.10.4 Replicability

Similar to generalisability, replicability is more of a concern for quantitative research than qualitative research. Replicability outlines that similar results would be achieved if a similar research were to be conducted at another time (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Fejszes, 2017). Since qualitative research is highly subjective the possibilities for replicable results are reduced (Fejszes, 2017). This results in an argument that “in qualitative research achieving the replicability is difficult thus if the research was repeated the results could be different” (Gilbert, 2008; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Fejszes, 2017, p123). This research focused on the motivation for consumption of Harley-Davidson products amongst male consumers aged between 40 and 60, the researcher is confident that if the research had been conducted earlier the results would be of similar nature. Due to likely changes based on international politics, the result may differ in the future, however, if these changes do not occur the researcher would be confident that results would also be of similar nature in the future.

3.11 Bias

Qualitative research is highly subjective and therefore can be easily prone to bias (Neuman, 2011; Gilbert, 2008). Bias can be displayed by the interviewer and interviewee as both parties are prejudiced and bring their own values and beliefs into the research (Quimby, 2012). As outlined in Chapter 3.2.2, the researcher needs to attempt to reduce personal bias as far as possible. The reduction of personal bias will increase the research credibility and subsequently its reliability and validity (Mack et al., 2005; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Silverman, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Fejszes, 2017).

Limiting interviewee bias can be challenging based on the subjective matter being researched, however, eliminated based on conducting interviews with a variety of participants which allows for different backgrounds and knowledge about the researched topic can be represented within the research (Saunders et al., 2012; Fejszes, 2017). In discussion in the interviews, the researcher identified that the participants did not change their behaviour or manner of answering if the researcher revealed that he himself was a Harley-Davidson owner. A potential reason for this can be connected to the age of the researcher as the interviewee could perceive his experience higher than the experience of the researcher. The researcher's personal ownership was not hidden or disguised. The participants were more than happy to discuss their personal leisure activity and did so with the passion that they have for the product of consumption.

It has been argued in the academic literature that during the interview process participants attempt to give answers in keeping with the social environment that he is part of rather than an answer indicating their own personal belief (Lavrakas, 2008; Fejszes, 2017). Whilst sometimes these may be connected, it can also occur that a dissonance is in place and the participant selects to give answers that are more applicable to the social environment. This increases the bias of the interviewee as it does not reflect the participant's honest opinion. Fisher (1993) argued that "respondents are often unwilling or unable to report accurately on sensitive topics for ego defensive or impression management reasons" (p303). Whilst the researcher was aware of this potential bias the interviews were conducted in a straightforward manner. It is also believed that the ego-defensive reasons, described by Fisher (1993), are not as strongly connected to the data collected for this particular research.

The participants often spoke about highly personal aspects without prompting, including alcoholism, depression and illnesses. Whilst it would have been possible to disguise questions in a manner that the participant discusses the general population more than himself, it was decided that due to the research focus on the consumption motivation for the participant it would not be beneficial to deliver the questions in that manner.

As well as participant bias, it also needs to be considered how the research can be affected by bias that originates from the researcher himself and his connection to the research topic (Norris, 1997; Fejszes, 2017). The researcher is required to remain objective, putting aside his personal feelings and perceptions to focus on the data collection (Fejszes, 2017). One important bias that can influence the research through the data collection is through a form of interviewer bias in which the interview is guided by the researcher's personal values or motives to present the data in a certain way (Fejszes, 2017). This influence is a danger to the research as it would not allow a fair judgement and analysis of the data itself. The interviewee would be steered towards giving certain answers and introducing a bias to the research (Saunders et al., 2012). Through the use of a semi-structured interview which relies on some key questions but also allows for variations to the manner in which the interview is conducted, interviewer bias was also eliminated (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Silverman, 2009; Fejszes, 2017). As can be observed in Appendix 2 in Chapter 7.2, attempts were made to keep the questions as neutral as possible to reduce the chances of creating bias within the data collection process (Mason, 2005; Saunders et al., 2007; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009).

The interview questions were based on questions that emerged through the literature review and were grouped accordingly. However, during the interview stage, it became apparent that more in-depth data emerged as the interview continued, therefore, it was decided to reiterate some questions which allowed the interviewee to further elaborate on key aspects in connection to his Harley-Davidson consumption. The interview was set out in a manner which allowed the interviewer and interviewee to establish a friendly conversation which was easy to follow (Walliman, 2006). It was notable that participants introduced aspects that were not anticipated by the researcher and this openness of the participants allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the consumption behaviour of the participants.

To further reduce bias from the researcher perspective, a process referred to as reflexivity was used which allowed for the objective stance to be self-evaluated (Greene, 2014). The researcher additionally utilised his supervisory team to discuss the data collection process under which suggestions were made and objectivity remained stable.

3.12 Research Ethics

Within research it is important to follow ethical guidelines, particularly in a social environment, when aiming to understand people and what makes them unique (Fejszes, 2017). It is important that the researcher follows these guidelines, as ethics are focusing on “doing the right things the right way.” (Boje, 2008, p8). Throughout the research, ethical values will be considered which will include respect towards people’s opinion, reducing harm in taking part, caring for the participant’s wellbeing, and being fair (Seale, 2004; Fejszes, 2017). The researcher followed the Ethics Guidelines, Procedures and Regulations (2011) established by Queen Margaret University.

The research focused on male participants aged 40 to 60 years of age which is a range of less vulnerable participants. Nevertheless, research that is conducted within a community may bring up sensitive topics (Renzetti & Lee, 1993). Additionally, these outcomes have the impact of alterations within the community taking place in the aftermath (Renzetti & Lee, 1993; Kane & de Brun, 2005; Fejszes, 2017). It was therefore required to conduct the research in a respectful, trustworthy and honest manner (Seale, 2004; Babbie, 2007; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2008; Bradbury & Reason, 2008; Fejszes, 2017).

Prior to the interview taking place, the researcher sought participants through an informed consent which outlines that the potential interviewee participates in the study voluntarily after receiving a full explanation of the research, the interview and how his information will be used. The participants have the chance to ask questions to the researcher who answers them honestly and to his best understanding. The participant will then be asked to sign a consent form which will be safely secured by the researcher and will remain in his possession. During the interview, the participant was not deceived and would partake in an honest research. Additionally, confidentiality and anonymity were granted to all participants. Through the research, no names will

be used that could identify the participants' identity, including personal information (Wengraf, 2002; Reamer, 2013; Punch, 2014; Fejszes, 2017).

During the data collection, it was made clear to the subjects that they are able to terminate the interview at any point. For questions that could be perceived as emotionally invasive or of a sensitive nature, the researcher informed the participants prior to asking and reiterated that they do not have to answer the question or can withdraw from the study without giving an explanation.

The participants must be informed fully about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks, if any, are involved (ESRC, 2015). Furthermore, research participants should take part voluntarily, free from any coercion or undue influence, and their rights, dignity and, when possible, autonomy should be respected and appropriately protected (ESRC, 2015). All Queen Margaret University ethical processes were carried out, according to the requirements of the guidelines and the QMU ethics committee.

Chapter Four - Data Analysis

Chapter Four- Data Analysis

The data presented was gathered by the researcher personally and anonymity is guaranteed to the participants. No participant names are used, each cluster is numbered in the chronological order the Interviews were conducted. Additionally, it is noted that 'outsiders', refers to the non-motorcyclist cluster who offer the understanding of a person who does not have insight into the environment of a motorcyclist.

4.1 Introduction to the Data

A brief introduction to the data, as seen below, illustrates the data collection process for the Harley-Davidson consumer cluster. The interviews were conducted at the Harley Davidson Dealership in Edinburgh, due to the lack of interest indicated by the local Harley Owner Group Chapter. However, it became much more successful to conduct the interviews at the local dealership as a bigger diversity of Harley Riders were interviewed and given the opportunity to indicate their own reason for their purchasing behaviour. Such a variety of people would not have been reached if the sole focus was on local HOG chapters. As described, the sample gender was male, the age was 40 to 60 years and the participant had to be the owner of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. Overall 24 participants were selected who fitted the selection criteria of the study. Four participants chose to have their partner present during the interview, which was not an excluding factor and had a positive impact on the interview as it appeared that the partner could confirm certain aspects in case there was some confusion and could also outline specific aspects such as the impact on the home life. At the end of each interview a £10 Voucher for Harley-Davidson was given to each participant.

4.1.1 Harley-Davidson Cluster

Candidate	Age	Age Started Motorcycling	Age 1st Harley Bought	Length of Harley Ownership	Difference between Starting to ride and riding a Harley	Number of Motor-bikes Owned	Number of Harley's Owned
1	60	16	56	4	40	10 (12)	1
2	49	9	47,5	1,5	38,5	15	2
3	52	14	46	6	32	10 to 11	1
4	60	20	48	12	28	25	7
5	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
6	60	16	40	20	24	12	3
7	43	28	40	3	12	3	1
8	59	19	49	10	30	>30	5
9	58	16	57	1	41	6	1
10	53	33	48	5	15	15	3
11	60	7	/	/	/	10	1
12	55	16	55	0	39	~30	1
13	57	9	51	6	42	100	3
14	/	/	/	/	/	9	5
15	/	/	/	/	/	1	1
16	52	12	48	4	36	20	1
17	42	17	41	1	24	4	1
18	50	12	49	1	37	50	1
19	48	31	45	3	14	7	1
20	51	16	50	1	34	20	1
21	48	14	45	3	31	12	2
22	55	16	40	15	24	30	4
23	59	16	45	14	29	20	7
24	56	44	44	12	0	8	6
Mean (≈)	54	18	47	6	29	19	3

Table 4.1: Harley-Davidson Cluster data

The average length of the interviews for participants of the Harley-Davidson Cluster was 21 Minutes and 2 Seconds (21.02 Minutes). Some participants have taken part in the study for a longer period of time, in some cases close to one hour, whilst others gave brief interviews. However, due to the detailed questioning of the researcher the required information for the research was obtained from the participants which allowed for a rich data analysis. Further questioning seemed unnecessary based on “decisions about when further data collection is unnecessary are commonly based on

the researcher's sense of what they are hearing within interviews, and this decision can therefore be made prior to coding and category development. (Saunders et al., 2018, p1899). The age of the interviewees averaged 54 years of age which is a close connection to the age criteria, the youngest participant was 42 whereas the oldest participant was 60. The age group specifications were appropriately met. The mean age at which they commenced motorcycling was 18 years, resulting in a long-lasting affection towards motorcycling. The youngest age to start motorcycling was 9 years old, and the oldest was 44. Since Harley has an apparent problem of being seen as an "Old Man's Brand" it was also important to identify the age that each participant purchased their first Harley-Davidson motorcycle. The average age for the purchase of their first Harley came to 47 years of age with a range of 40 to 57 as a starting age. The aspect of age will become important during a later stage of this work as it identifies a significant process and adaptation in behaviour and understanding.

Age is not an important factor in itself, but the age of starting motorcycling and the age buying the first Harley Davidson in combination with a third factor. This factor is the number of motorbikes owned throughout the motorcyclist's riding career. Additionally, the number of Harleys was added to that specific part to give further detail of the habits of the riders. The average of the responses of the participants in regard to the number of bikes that they owned was 19 motorbikes throughout their lives. The answers ranged from 1 to 100 motorcycles. Some participants were unsure about the exact number by giving vague descriptions such as "too many to remember them all", in that case, the number of bikes mentioned throughout the interview was counted and taken as a fact for the purpose of finding an appropriate figure. When it came to more direct questions regarding the number of Harley-Davidson owned the answers were more definitive, only one participant was unable to state and the same method as previously was applied. The average number of Harley-Davidsons owned was 3. Harley-Davidson is a brand that is purchased in smaller numbers, which may appear obvious as it is one specific brand against various other types of motorcycles such as Speed bikes, Trial bikes, Sports-tourers, and various others. However, if taken this specific average in comparison to the age that the participant indicated at which he purchased the first Harley-Davidson it becomes quite significant. The average participant waited for over 28 years before purchasing their first Harley-Davidson and on average has been riding Harley-Davidsons for 6 years in that time he will have purchased 3 Harley's in that period. However, 50% of the participants have outlined that they have only owned one Harley

Davidson so far. Nevertheless, this can be seen as the generic picture for this study and to illustrate an important aspect of consumer behaviour in this research.

4.1.1.1 Additional Background

Whilst the data collection was conducted at the local Harley-Davidson dealership it outlined more than a small local dealership. One reason for this was that only two official Harley-Davidson dealerships are present in Scotland, one in Edinburgh and the other in Glasgow. Selecting one of these for data collection allowed for a large variety of data collection to occur.

During the interview phase one participant (participant 7) of the appropriate age and gender was present who was in Edinburgh on a visit related to work. He originated from India and was the vice-president of a Motorcycle Club he founded in India. He outlined that: *"I started a motorcycle club back in India. I'm the Vice-President of the Club now. It's called Days Sport Cycle Club; you can google it you will find us. It's been a year now, we got 21 members."* He contributed further aspects that allowed for an extension of this research in the future. The pricing of the motorcycles in India are similar to purchasing costs in the United Kingdom, based on Participant 7s' expertise as he stated: *"you have to pay there as well down in India. So, it's the same as in the UK. Not much of a difference."*

This further adds to the internationality of Harley-Davidson and the interest of Harley-Davidson consumers to visit other Harley-Davidson dealerships on their travels.

4.1.2 Non-Motorcyclist Cluster

The same age specifications were assigned to the non-motorcyclist cluster allowing a comparison between the two groups. To further strengthen the comparative aspect, it was decided to remain focused solely on male participants as introducing another variable would hinder a direct comparison. As the name of the cluster already suggests the only variation from the previously outlined interview group was the factor if the participants rides or does not ride a motorcycle or more specifically owns a Harley-Davidson. Furthermore, in order to be eligible for participation the participant must not own a motorcycle at the moment of the interview. He may have a motorcycle license and have previous experiences but must not be an active motorcyclist at the time the Interview took place. Finding participants was more challenging for this particular Cluster as there was no direct meeting point as with the Harley-Davidson

Cluster. Furthermore, more people would be eligible to participate in the study. The researcher commenced with his personal environment at the Sports Club where he participates. It needs to be noted that he did not know any of the participants prior to the interview, allowing enough distance to be objective to interview. Through a referral system from previous participants, further participants have been accumulated which facilitated the data collection process for the non-motorcyclist cluster.

The same number of participants was selected as for the Harley-Davidson Cluster; 24 participants aged 40-60, male, who do not own a motorcycle at the moment of the interview.

The average length of the interviews was 7 Minutes and 59 Seconds (7.59 Minutes). It was expected that this cluster's participation time would be less than for the Harley-Davidson cluster interviews, as the non-motorcycle cluster are discussing a topic that they are not active in. This already results in a shortened enthusiasm for the study and a reduction of participation time. Additionally, the question list was shorter as they would not be able to answer questions directly related to Harley-Davidson consumption. The purpose of this cluster was to establish an outsider's perspective and to establish a different outlook to Harley-Davidson consumers as the majority of UK residents are not motorcyclists. Additionally, the interviews are shorter based on the fact that the Harley-Davidson cluster was facing a greater number of questions based on around the motorcycle and their personal Harley-Davidson experience.

The mean age of the non-motorcycle cluster was 49. Although the Harley-Davidson cluster had a higher average age (54) but were nevertheless close to each other, showing an effective Participation selection. The youngest participant for the non-motorcycle cluster was 41 and the oldest 58.

Participant 11 stated that he previously rode motorcycles but stopped and was not an active motorcyclist at the interview. Interesting insights were gained from participant 11 as he had an understanding of the environment of motorcyclists but also had reason to stop his participation in the said environment due to family reasons. Therefore, stating reasons that participants who have never ridden a motorcycle shared with him.

Whilst the Harley-Davidson Cluster received a £10 voucher for Harley-Davidson, the non-motorcycle cluster was reimbursed for their time spend on the interview, receiving £10 cash. For the Harley-Davidson Cluster the voucher was based on their personal

interests. Since the non-motorcycle cluster may have different interests it was decided to use £10 in cash as a form of reimbursement, which may be used at the participant's discretion.

4.2 Brand of Harley-Davidson

An important differentiation needs to be made at this point as Harley consists of two parts, on the one hand, there are the products of the motorbikes and merchandise but on the other hand, there is the subcultural community surrounding Harley-Davidson. It is important to differentiate the one from the other at first before being able to understand the whole appeal that Harley-Davidson has on its consumers. Additionally, that differentiation will assist in outlining the insiders, Harley-Davidson consumers, and outsiders, non-motorcyclists. Both groups may have an understanding of the motorcycle whereas only the Harley-Davidson consumers are able to enter the subculture and participate in the community aspect of the consumption.

4.2.1 The Motorcycle

All participants have been in contact with Harley-Davidson products even if it is just briefly seeing a Harley-Davidson on the road. This allows for a connection and subsequent association to be made even by non-consumers.

The motorcycles produced by Harley-Davidson offer a wide appeal to consumers especially the male, middle-aged demographic for reason that will be outlined at a later stage of the data analysis, as the age factor will require more focus and justification. However, various other approaches which illustrate the appeal that Harley is generating will be discussed at this point. Participant 15 of the Harley-Davidson Cluster outlined that *"Motorcycling is the most senseless thing to do but it's also the most incredible feeling."*, generalising motorcycling and the overall appeal for him personally that makes him an active Harley consumer.

4.2.1.1 Influence of Harley's American roots

Harley's American roots is an essential facet of Harley-Davidson identifiable by Harley riders, motorcyclists, and non-motorcyclists. Previously, it was assumed that the American side of Harley has an impact on the consumption of the products produced by this American icon. Its iconic status will be discussed later on in this segment. Nevertheless, Harley's American roots are seen as an influencing factor prior to the

interview stage as it appears that it has a positive effect on the desire for consumption. Americana becomes important as the location for the research was outside of the US and European perception may differ from other location of Harley riders examined, such as the United States (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995) or Australia (Schembri, 2009).

However, during the interviews, it became apparent that the Harley-Davidson's American affiliation does not appear to have as much of an impact as previously assumed. Only a small majority (57.89 %) claimed that American influences made it more appealing to them, however, this is often more in relation to American location and the desire to ride their motorcycle through iconic American locations such as Route 66. This leaves 42.11% of Harley-Davidson consumers tending to see the American roots of Harley as not a contributing factor to Harley's appeal and their own consumption. One participant stated whilst he appreciates the connection to the United States and the Americana of the product, he also outlines that this might change due to current changes stating President Trump as the key influence in potential changes. So overall, it might have been an influencing factor but must not be regarded as so significant as originally assumed. This underlines the findings of Schembri (2009) whose research was also conducted outside the US, and in some cases, the American side of Harley was perceived as a negative aspect of the motorcycle. Attempts have been made to adapt the Australian culture in order to limit the "Americanness" of Harley. These attempts could also be seen in Scotland as one participant was eager to point out the Scottish heritage that the brand has by correctly stating that the Davidson family originated from North of Edinburgh, whilst also falsely stating that the Harley family was originally from South of Edinburgh, as they actually came from Littleport in Cambridgeshire before emigrating to the US.

There appears to be a difference between Harley consumers' perception in contrast to the outsiders' perspective, as outsiders tend to associate Harley's American background much more than the Harley riders.

4.2.1.2 Emotional Associations

Emotions have an important role in this research and it is important to identify those emotions involved in consumer behaviour. To facilitate, expressions of emotions are used to analyse specific words, such as love or hate, as well as stress as indicators of emotional impact on consumption.

From the literature review, it was assessed that keywords such as freedom and would be a marker for the research. However, data analysis revealed that emotions of freedom and deliberation play a far less significant role for motorcyclists than originally estimated. For Harley-Davidson motorcycles impact on emotions it appears that there is no differentiation between one type of motorcycle and another as they all appear to trigger a similar reaction in regard to the emotional response to freedom. In fact, not freedom, as the keyword, but deliberation, appears to be more suitable for motorcycle riders as two-wheeled vehicles are often strategically used by consumers at times of stress, and it is regarded as a “stress buster” to take the motorcycle and ride for a couple of hours to leave everything behind as underlined by several participants. In just one example, participant 7 describes it as *“It’s a kind of stress-buster for me. Whenever I’m stressed or my mood is down, I just take my bike and come back and filled with energy again”*.

In this sense, the same argument as previous research for mountain climbing, white-water rafting and skydiving, remain valid for the motorcycling environment of Harley-Davidson. It is as an attempted escape from the daily struggles and routines to seek the temporary creation of a sanctuary before returning back to the normal day-to-day duties. This can be outlined through one participant who describes this form of deliberation very suitably by saying, *“When I’m out on the bike, I don’t think eh, has ma rent money been paid for, I don’t think when am I going to buy ma next fixer-upper. When I’m out on the bike I’m just happy and free.”*

In a similar manner, a sense of longing is being expressed by the participants of the Harley-Davidson cluster. Participants 15 and 24 expressed this when looking back on the history of Harley and their personal association with the brand. When they were younger Harley’s were very rare to get, as participant 15 states, *“I’ve always wanted to get a Harley. I mean when I was younger nobody could get a Harley, they were so hard to get.”* Participant 24 outlined his position similarly: *“When I was young nobody could afford a Harley, so as I got older, I grew up, I earned more money and could afford it. So it was the thing of not being able to buy one when I was younger and now I can, so, I do it.”* Participants also identify a significant change in the manner of acquisition that is currently in place. It has become significantly less difficult to purchase a Harley, *“Now everybody can have one.”* This change makes it more open to the public and has impacted the consumers’ decision-making process changing from an exclusive brand to a more accessible brand. Participant 24 offers a different

perspective which focuses on the monetary impact on Harley's scarceness previously whereas his personal development allowed him to make the purchase now, *"When I was young nobody could afford a Harley, so as I got older I grew up I earned more money and could afford it. So, it was the thing of not being able to buy one when I was younger and now I can, so I do it."*

However, outsiders to the motorcycle world do see the riders as free. This freedom is often expressed through the freedom of movement, such as being able to move more freely through congested traffic. This particular aspect of freedom might be of small significance but is classified under freedom, nevertheless.

4.2.1.3 Metal not Plastic

During the interview phase of the Harley-Davidson cluster, it was identified that the way the motorcycles are produced makes them very appealing to consumers. This is not in relation to the location of the production, but rather the simplicity and ruggedness that the motorcycles represent. Participants stated that the aspect of metal rather than plastic gives it a very nice look and makes it more appealing to them rather than Japanese manufactured motorbikes which often have plastic covers which will make it more aerodynamic and lighter than metal. Whilst metal increases the weight of the motorcycle it also adds to its appeal, through that particular aspect the consumer perceives Harley as genuine. Participant 15 and 3 both credit Harley's metal manufacturing as a key component to their consumption of Harley-Davidson products and compare it to other brands in the same sentence, as they state *"There's no plastic on the bikes, they are pure metal. Not like race bikes"*, stated participant 15. Participant 3 adds *"But it's just really is the draw of the actual look of the bikes, the manufacturer. Most of the Harleys you'd still need chroming as most of it is metal. You go to a Jap Bike and it's all plastic"*. This particular comparison was only mentioned by two participants, but it helps to demystify Harley-Davidson's appeal and needs to be considered as an influencing factor towards consumption.

4.2.2 The Community

Harley-Davidson offers a not just products but extends its brand through consumer participation in a subculture. This consists of several aspects, not limited to, Harley-Davidson owner groups, riding groups, and dealerships. It is important to note that these dealerships do not solely consist of selling and supplying products to consumers

but should be regarded as a meeting place for Harley owners. Thus, strengthening the affiliation with the brand of Harley-Davidson.

Riders tend to appreciate such participation within the subculture due to its relaxed approach, as it is not a meeting of a group but rather an individual's decision to go or not to go. On Saturdays, the Edinburgh dealership experiences its busiest time. The time spent in the dealership does not always consist of purchasing but provides a background for the consumers.

Several participants link their enjoyment of the Harley-Davidson products to these days at the dealerships, an example of the bond that exists in the friendly Harley-Davidson environment.

However, the community feature of Harley-Davidson needs to be extended to other parts. Through previous research, the riding groups obtain the main focus in regard to explaining the consumption of Harley-Davidson. Especially Schembri (2009) placed a high focus on the HOGs in order to compare their behaviour to Holt's four dimensions of consumption. However, what is important to note is that whilst it appears to be appropriate at first sight to conduct the research amongst HOG members it does not create a fair and just image of Harley-Davidson's community which is far more complex than just the owner groups.

4.2.2.1 HOG and others

Amongst the participants, a large number are members of the Harley owner group but also stated that their membership is not of an active nature and their primary riding group is different to the HOGs. Negative comments about the HOGs were also made by participants. These comments are critiques of the structure of the owner groups, which, according to a variety of participants is not focused enough on the riding aspect, such as the statement of participant 21, *"The HOG organisation seems to me too clear-cut, too organised"*. Additionally, this organisation affects the manner of consumption and can be seen by some as burdensome. Participant 5 described it in the following manner *"We don't want to be tied down to a HOG Group."*, although *"It's nice to meet people associated with the HOG and that. Meeting people. Seeing People. It's good, but it's not a big part of it for us"*.

As mentioned before the HOGs do not represent the primary riding group, there needs to be a distinction between membership and participation. Membership numbers for the HOGs are high based on two factors, the first that with every Harley-Davidson

purchased an automatic one-year membership will be given to the consumer. The second factor is that owners may extend memberships to benefit from programs such as discounts for riding skill training or Roadside Assistance. Therefore, memberships do not reflect the number of active participants or Chapter members.

Consumers tend to be already integrated into one particular group, which, in some cases, are not limited to Harley riders but are open to different brands, being more inclusive rather than exclusive, which is an important point considered later in the thesis.

Two participants were members of the Widow's Sons, a masonic biker group which seemed to have a significant impact on the two members in their post-purchase life. Participant 24 stated *"If I'm honest if I didn't have a bike I wouldn't be in the Masons."* which indicates a significant connection between the consumption of Harley-Davidson and impact on their personal life. Depending on one's perception and understanding of Masonic rituals this can be seen as positive or negative, but to the two participants, it appeared to be of significance to combine riding a Harley together with the life and rituals of a Freemason. Benefits for post-purchase lifestyle are discussed at a later stage in more detail.

4.2.2 Icon

Harley-Davidson is one of the most recognisable brands in the world and as such the majority of people have some sort of connection to it, even if it is just briefly seeing one on the road. The icon of Harley extends to the non-motorcyclist cluster as well, which grant Harley-Davidson its iconic status. Often in the same breath, the term of mid-life crisis is mentioned in order to describe the rider but that does not reflect negatively on Harley's iconic image.

This is further strengthened through the media and more specifically cinematic representations such as the 1969 "Easy Rider" starring Peter Fonda which adds to Harley-Davidson representation as an iconic brand. The irony of this becomes more apparent as Harley-Davidson originally refused to contribute motorcycles for the filming and the motorcycles had to be acquired through auctions.

Harley-Davidson's appeal is focused on two reoccurring themes, first, the iconic aspect of Harley and second its relation to Easy Rider which some attempt to

replicate. As mentioned, both groups of Harley riders and non-motorcyclists described these two inputs in order to capture Harley-Davidson's wide appeal to its consumers.

Harley-Davidson's iconic status is undeniably existent, as one participant described it: *"the brand. It is iconic, if you agree with it or not. Whether it's a great icon or not, but it is an icon nevertheless it's an iconic brand."* Participant 4 went so far as to explain his purchase as that he *"bought a badge"*, implying that he solely bought a Harley for the sake of being a Harley rather than for the activities it offers him, such as travelling or runs.

The original purchasing costs may be reflected and explained through its iconic status and potentially a willingness to pay premiums may be generated just to be able to say "I own a Harley" or as participant 4 further expanded on his previous statement *"That's the thing with the bike, unlike with any kind of bike. You're not just buying a Harley, you're buying a lifestyle"*.

4.2.2.1 Non-Motorcycle Cluster Perception

Whilst the Harley Rider perceives the brand of Harley-Davidson as an icon that they like to be part of it is also important to look at the perception of the iconic brand of Harley-Davidson from an outsider's perspective. For this, the perceptions of the non-motorcycle cluster is used which will facilitate a greater understanding of the brand of Harley-Davidson. The non-motorcycle cluster has a general understanding of the motorcycle brand of Harley and most people have seen one in their lifetime. Although limited contact has been had with the brand it still adds to a personal understanding of the Harley-Davidson. The interview allowed them to express their understanding freely and illustrated that the iconic brand image that Harley-Davidson has also reaches non-consumers, and according to the non-motorcycle cluster stands out from other motorbike manufacturers. Participant 9 outlined this attraction when asked his opinion of the appeal of Harley-Davidson: *"It's the whole Harley-Davidson- I mean when you think about it when they are going past, when they are staring at a traffic light. I mean, you've got other motorcycles they just don't get close to it. And you see Harley also on TV, they stand out. They just look really, really good."* The fame of Harley extends to its recognisability as a big player in the market of motorcycles. Participant 6 states *"Certainly in my lifetime the Harley-Davidsons stood out as the sort of pinnacle of what I would associate as the Rolls-Royce of motorbikes. Many people argue one case or another. I'm not stupid enough to get on a motorcycle so I don't have a big issue with British bikes against American bikes. But if you think of the*

imagery, I think Harley-Davidson comes at the top.” Participant 15 also uses the Rolls-Royce comparison, both to illustrate the luxury quality of Harley, and to outline the driving behaviour of the motorbike and the rider; *“They are not built for speed, but they are there for comfort and style. They are the Rolls-Royce of bikes, they are not like Ferraris, they are the Rolls-Royce of bikes.”*

The non-motorcycle cluster of Harley-Davidson see Harley as a well-known, luxury brand, which stands out to them as being cool. Some do not have an opinion on it and others do not see the need for a motorcycle, but nevertheless, the majority of participants in this Cluster give Harley the previously mentioned attributes which underline its iconic status.

4.2.3 Outlaw Image

It was originally proposed by the researcher that the outlaw image and the tough guy appearance are part of the motivations towards consumption when looking at Harley-Davidson. Again, an image that might be created and strengthened through cinematic representation. However, after the interview phase was completed it was identified that both groups make little association to this.

On the contrary, a distinct divide is in place for the Harley consumer who is not part of such an organisation and the known criminal groupings such as the Hells Angels. In some cases, the interviewee outlined that there is a humorous side to that specific part as the reality looks very different, including that bikers tend to be highly involved in charity organisations and donations (Participant 12: *“A lot of people say that Harley riders are bad. But we do so much for charity, I mean I’ve done more charity stuff in the last few months, since I joined, than I’ve done in my whole life before.”*). Others tend to accept their existence but do not get involved with them (Participant 13 when asked how he sees the outlaw image that surrounds Harley: *“I’m not involved with them, so I can’t really say.”*). However, a large number of participants state that they do not see the connection between Harley riders and outlaw groupings.

This perception has been strongly supported by the non-motorcycle cluster which has a distinct disassociation between Harley and the outlaw groups. It is often established by the interviewees that this connection is not present in Scotland, whilst they might see it differently in the US. Thus, the geographic influence becomes more apparent and geographic understandings of Harley may vary in such cases. The non-

motorcycle cluster underlines this perception of the geographic differences as they believe that the outlaw culture in relation to the motorcycle environment is mostly present in the United States and not in the United Kingdom. Whilst they acknowledge the existence of outlaw groupings such as the Hells Angels, they do not perceive them as violent or as prominent from reports or TV programs from the US. Contrasting greatly to any outlaw image, participant 11 outlined a stereotype of British Harley Riders *“not so much in this country, because everyone knows that they are just accountants and lawyers etcetera being cowboys on the weekends. Sometimes some of them are- sometimes other people have them. But it’s not an image that really is here in Britain. In America it has much more of a culture around it.”*

Participant 2 of the non-motorcyclist cluster perceives Harley riders in a newer stereotypical manner. In his view, a Harley rider is an older gentleman with a long beard and wearing leather clothes, but his personality is more of a peaceful nature as he is solely focused on his own enjoyment whilst riding.

Through the knowledge of participant 8 it has been outlined that the outlaw gangs are shifting away from Harley-Davidson to other manufacturers based on their overall popularity as he states: *“In New Zealand. I got friends in New Zealand. And a lot of the badass guys out of the Motor gangs and stuff and a lot of them have left Harley and went on to Victory [...] Because they didn’t like the way Harley has gone to mainstream”*.

It needs to be said at this point that no known violent groups have been contacted at any stage of the research or the interview phase. This is based on potential safety issues for the researcher. For the future, it may be interesting to see how the 1 Percenter groups, motorcycle club with a known tendency towards violence and criminal activities perceive the influence of Harley and their motorcycle in connection to their activities.

4.2.4 Clothing

Stereotypically Harley riders dress in a very specific way, which also distinguishes them from other motorcyclists. Whilst certain aspects vary from consumer to consumer, Harley consumers are often seen wearing a leather jacket or a vest with patches on them signifying specific tours or American symbols that are closely related to Harley-Davidson such as the eagle. However, it also needs to be noted that this

appearance does not relate to every member as functional motorcycling clothing are seen regularly as well as normal clothing. However, in some cases, the leather jacket signifies a deeper personal meaning than just clothing. As participant 4 describes his personal connection to his leather jacket *"I always thought I couldn't afford a Harley. I bought a jacket ((pointing at his leather jacket)), years and years and years ago and thought I won't buy a Harley 'cause I couldn't justify it."* He also illustrates the difference between the motorbike and the clothing based on the cost factor. It is easier for someone to justify the purchase of a jacket rather than a motorcycle. In some cases the purchase of the clothing can be regarded as a starting point for their consumption as buying the leather jacket from Harley-Davidson signals an interest and affection towards the brand but may also indicate hesitation as with Participant 4, where, ultimately, the purchase happened.

For other members of the Harley community, wearing the motorcycle clothing is not just for riding motorcycles but a lifestyle choice. Even during his professional work Participant 20 states *"I am an assistant manager for mental health service. This is how I go to work ((leather vest, tattoos on show etc.)). You know, it's "What you see is what you get!" and because I'm good at what I do it's generally accepted, and I've been working in the field for that long that people in other organisations, or the council, know me."* Participant 20 is an example of Holt's dimension of classification as the consumer enters the community and adapts accordingly. This classification extends further than just during the participation within the subculture but rather impacts on their personal life even if the decision was not to get too involved. He states that his original decision differed from his actual participation *"I said "I'm not buying into the lifestyle, I won't do Harley-only events, I won't get the tattoos", and I've gone the complete opposite. Completely opposite. Even my grandkids say it's too much. You go in through the front door, there's a big Harley-Davidson sort of rubber mat. There's one there. There's one up in the bedroom. I just gone nuts."*

As suggested by participant 20, the merchandise department of Harley-Davidson is extensive and is not limited to leather jackets. Harley consists of three main revenue streams, the motorcycles, parts & accessories, and merchandise as the third largest.

Over time it became a tradition whilst travelling that riders visit other local dealership and purchase a T-shirt with location-specific prints in order to indicate their affiliation and previous travels. Again an aspect which can be deeply embedded into the dimension of classification in which the consumer attempts to maximise connection

to the brand and community by other purchases. Within the classification dimension, this particular approach can be categorised under object classification as the consumer actively adapts the subculture and interacts with the product.

This approach may not be apparent to outsiders and therefore it will be difficult for them to understand. However, for Harley riders it is familiar, a way for riders to acknowledge their fellow riders. This extends from other merchandise such as a baseball cap or football shirts, by which the consumer can express the classification process on a primary level. Whereas, Harley-Davidson offers this primary understanding for all to see but introduces a secondary level which can serve as a means to classify oneself to fellow subcultural participants.

Given its fame and iconic status, non-motorcycle cluster participants often have an image in their head of a stereotypical Harley Rider which also includes the clothing as a part of the image. Participant 2 described: *"I think I associate them with the leathers, the hair, the bandanas and more focused on the look of the individual as opposed to the sort of bike that that they are riding."* Leather clothing appears to be of importance to the non-motorcycle cluster as also Participant 1 outlines: *"You know the sort of open helmet, the sort of thing like that. I would never associate Harley-Davidson with a full-face visor. So, it's very much this kind of freedom, peace. And then again, I would see Harley-Davidson with the full style leather jacket, the jeans. I wouldn't see [...] the leather trousers. Maybe just the jacket, the jeans and the boots."*

4.2.6 Outsiders Perception

After talking to the participants who do not own a motorcycle, various perceptions have been created that reflect an outsider's perspective. Outsiders, in this case, relate to potential consumers who do not participate in the consumption of Harley-Davidson or motorcycling products. Whilst many have stated that they have an appreciation for them based on the looks of motorcycles and the freedom that the riders experience. Participant 6 expressed: *"I admire them. I kinda look at people and think that I would quite like to be them."* or Participant 17, stating interest in motorcycling *"I quite like to ride a Bike myself."* Thus, indicating an element of jealousy amongst non-consumers.

A common word that was used by participants to describe Harley-Davidson and motorcycles, in general, was "cool" with various participants using that word to describe not just the motorcycles but also the riders. To underline the coolness that

they see when looking at a Harley-Davidson they used the Cinematic Representation of “Easy Rider” and one used “Terminator” with Arnold Schwarzenegger to illustrate the impact it has on them. With this link to Easy Rider, both clusters share a common representation and illustration.

Some participants stated that motorcycles are too loud for their liking and they appear to be unnecessary. However, for most participants, the risk factor involved in motorcycling is too great to justify the consumption and putting their lives at risk for their own enjoyment. An ideal example for this link between motorcycling and their current life situation came from Participant 7 when asked if he ever considered obtaining a motorcycling license *“I would have considered prior to being married, now that I have- now that I’m married and have children I wouldn’t. I see it as a slightly dangerous occupation.”*

4.3 The Old Man Bike

Harley-Davidson is seen as the old man’s motorcycle, which already suggests that there must be a connection between the age of the consumer and the brand, as previously discussed there is a distinct connection between Harley-Davidson and the age perception of its consumers. This common interpretation of the brand is based on two factors, the speed, and the comfort of the motorcycle.

4.3.1 Mid-Life Crisis Perception

As outlined, age is an important factor when it comes to the consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Outsiders, i.e. non-motorcyclists, may see a Harley-Davidson as an object purchased during a period of what is known as mid-life crisis in order to appear young and more attractive by drawing attention to oneself whilst riding. The topic of mid-life crisis becomes important, especially when looking at an age group that can be classified as middle-aged men who might attempt to tackle a mid-life crisis through specific consumption. When thinking of a Harley-Davidson motorbike, two words may come to mind, chrome and noise, that may indicate an emphasis on a purchase conducted at this particular time. However, strong evidence can be found that this is not the case.

A variety of participants outlined that they see a significant connection between the brand of Harley-Davidson and the middle-aged consumer. Participant 1 expressed his opinion about this particular aspect as followed: *"The thing with Harley I think it's this safe mid-life crisis bike. It sort of targets the sort of impulse buy. It's a great image."* Although it was not as broadly spread as it was originally believed by the researcher and more Harley-Davidson consumers see the age than it is being seen from an Outsiders Perspective.

4.3.1.1 Comfort

The speed of Harley-Davidson is related to the weight of the machine and the more "agricultural" feel as one participant described it. The comfort is in relation to the seating position on the motorcycle, the rider is placing himself in a position where his hands are extended, and the back is straight with his feet moving forward. Commonly known as a forward control motorcycle, due to the position of his feet by which he controls the breaks and gears. Ultimately keeping the riders' feet in front of the knees. Other types of motorcycles such as racing motorcycles come in a more sporting riding position in which the rider has the legs extended backwards, the upper body is moving over the fuel tank and the body weight is shifted more to the front of the motorcycle, this sport riding position allows for a greater aerodynamic of the rider in symbiosis with the motorcycle. In Interview 14, participant 1 describes the impact of the riding position on his way of riding and the improvement the switch to a Harley had for him personally, as he outlines *"It was just the positioning on the bike. I didn't get cramped up. With other bikes the sitting position gives me cramps especially when I'm at traffic lights or so."* Additionally, participant 21 describes his experience in regard to the comfort as followed: *"You just get the way of sitting and relaxing. Like an armchair. It handles like an armchair anyways."*

Whilst this is the description of a Harley consumers it is also important to note that the non-motorcycle cluster outlined that they perceive Harley-Davidson riders as quite relaxed and imagine a difference in comfort between motorcycle types.

4.3.1.2 Speed

With age, physical reaction may decrease, and motorcyclists may not feel confident enough to ride at high speeds or speed does not have the same appeal as it used to have when he was young. This aspect has been mentioned several times through statements *"the young kids just want to go fast, I don't find that, I don't like to ride like a lunatic anymore"*, in one case a direct link to age has been made *"I'm 60 I don't*

care. You know what I mean. I'm not 40 anymore" as participant 1 described his own position.

As a result of the two previous parts, four aspects become quite apparent in connection to the brand of Harley-Davidson and consumer intention. These factors are as follows: comfort, speed, chrome, and noise. The latter two are associated with an aspect of public appearance and therefore need to be classified thus. Chrome and noise represent the exterior of the rider and contribute to the public belief that this particular consumption is related to a mid-life crisis.

Participant 4 *"I don't like the white-knuckle stuff anymore. I'm not- Too old for that."*

The non-motorcycle cluster perception of the manner Harley consumers ride their bikes also reflected upon speed and other factors related to speed. In general, it appears that the Harley is seen as a safer motorcycle by the non-motorcycle cluster based on the weight, size, comfort, and speed of a Harley. They do not make the association of speed with Harley which already limits the risks to them. Participant 1 of the non-motorcycle cluster outlined that association, *"I think I see Harley-Davidson as sort of a safer bike. Whether or not that's just in my head because of the build of the bike, the sturdiness-"*. The understanding is similar to answers from the Harley cluster in which they state that speed is not an important factor to them anymore as they enjoy the comfort of the motorcycle to tour.

4.3.1.2.1 Seeing rather than Racing

To the aspect of speed of the riding, an important approach has to be mentioned which describes the mentality of the riders better than anything else and should be seen as the essence of Harley's effect on its consumers. As previously mentioned, it is not about the speed as with age the consumer anyway moves away from high powered or adventurous motorcycles. It is about the journey of the rider with the motorcycle. This was discussed in the literature review but has now been proven to be correct in the manner the consumer interacts with the product of consumption.

The perception of the ride according to several participants varies significantly to other motorcycles, especially when comparing Harley-Davidson to sports bikes. Participants described it as seeing more of the environment they travel through, being able to enjoy it much more than on different motorcycles: *"A Race bike rider he panics because he's going too bloody fast and doesn't see a thing, a Harley rider sees*

everything. A Harley rider will see a castle in the distance. An (R1) rider wouldn't know about it. He just sees a road." (Participant 11)

This particular description outlines the impact that the speed can have and the mentality that Harley riders indicate, it further strengthens Holt's dimensional model as the rider indicates a significant level of understanding of the product of consumption.

4.3.1.3 The Changing nature of the "Chromosexual" Environment

For many decades Harley-Davidson have been seen and represented in the media by very flamboyant designs loaded with chrome, an image that is very much part of the Harley-Davidson scene. However, it is important to note that in the Harley is now moving away from chrome and extravagant appearance. This can be seen in the recently released models of Harley (2018 Models) which are far less chrome packed and tend towards black or matt colours. What previously used to be chrome engines are now black engines with only some metal visible. Whilst this is an important trend to consider it is not universally applicable as not every rider shares the same understanding of how the motorcycle should look like. This correlates strongly with Holt's dimension of integration in which the consumer can express personal identity by personalising the mass-produced object of consumption. Participant 1 described himself as a "Chromosexual" based on the amount of



Image 4.1: Harley-Davidson Heritage Softail built in 1991. Currently used by a long-term Harley-Davidson consumer

chrome and the desire to have it as shiny and as clean as possible. Within the Harley-Davidson community the chrome on the motorcycle varies from consumer to consumer. Several participants have stated that they do not wish to load the motorcycle with chrome as they do not like the appearance it gives the motorbike.

4.3.1.4 Importance of Noise

The next factor that comes into play when discussing Harley-Davidson in relation to mid-life crisis is the level of noise produced. Though the loud noises it is believed that the Harley rider wants to draw further attention to oneself. However, this is yet another element of the integration and more specific of the personalising process, as participant 10 described *"The bikes don't come noisy, people make them noisy."* Fitting exhausts systems, most prominently Vance & Hince exhaust systems, on the Harley-Davidson gives the unique loud noise or *"agriculture thub"* as Participant 1 outlined. A variety of participants have agreed with a statement in Schembri's study of Harley riders in Australia in which the riders argued that "loud pipes save lives", due to the increased volume other road users are able to hear the riders "a mile away".

As the non-motorcycle cluster outlines, to outsiders the Harley rider is going through a mid-life crisis and may have purchased the motorcycle to appear young and show their wealth. Whilst age is a factor for Harley riders, the Harley-Davidson motorcycle is used by motorcyclists wishing to remain on two wheels. The noise addition of the Harley-Davidson subculture can be classified under Holt's integrational dimension.

4.3.1.5 Division of the Four

It is important to divide the four categories into two parts as it would be unjust to judge them together. This division is on the basis of the time and age at which consumption occurs. Comfort and speed need to be categorised as age-related consumption which appear to play a significant impact on the purchasing behaviour. Both speed and comfort seem motivated by the age that rider reaches as speed becomes less relevant to them and comfort reaches a new level of desirability. Through the higher comfort, the rider is able to practice their hobby for a prolonged time without feeling physical side effects such as cramps. However, speed becomes a less important factor to the consumer of Harley-Davidson as it is more desirable to enjoy rides rather than just seeing the road ahead. Harley consumers perceive the time spent on the motorcycle as enjoyable rather than just beating a personal best, participant 4 described it as *"You're cruising. Not hammering."* Clearly, reduced speed has an impact on the risk of riding a Harley-Davidson in comparison to other motorcycle types.

Noise and chrome need to be categorised differently. This is in relation to the period at which this consumption occurs. Harley-Davidson experiences a large shift against Chrome and most of their products demonstrate this. However, if a consumer tends towards chrome parts, he has the possibility to modify the product according to his

own wishes and desires. A similar approach can be taken when looking at the impact of noise that comes from a Harley-Davidson. Harley's are stereotypically seen as loud motorcycles. However, it needs to be mentioned that the original motorbike does not have the noise level that it is frequently heard, it is the consumer that makes them noisy. The motorbikes fitted with an aftermarket exhaust system that allows them to achieve the desired noise level. Whilst it is an important factor to mention to understand the Harley-Davidson community, it becomes irrelevant from the time frame in which particular consumption occurs as it is the consumer that desires the adaptations but does not reflect the Harley-Davidson production bikes.

To conclude this segment speed and comfort are age-dependent aspects and strongly reflect an emotional impact factor. In contrast, noise and chrome may be ignored in this discussion as they do not reflect the original purchase. Consumption occurs after the original motorbike purchase, so the two key factors which are often the reasons Harley-Davidson are related to a mid-life crisis by the public eye may be ignored.

4.3.2 Hate to Love

During the interview phase of the Harley-Davidson consumers it became apparent that buying a Harley was often not in connection to peer pressure. As some have stated that when they bought their first Harley, their friends made fun of it for being on an "old man bike" and proclaimed their dislike for Harley-Davidson that they would never ride a Harley for that purpose as illustrated by participant 21 as followed: *"I get a bit of stick from ma friends cause I'm riding a tractor as they call it"*. However, after a few years that perception changes in a manner that motivates them to purchase a Harley-Davidson as participant 15 outlined *"I think the next generation is not motorcycling as much, and if they do they just want to go fast. That comes with age. I was never into fast bikes, I always loved Harleys. But eventually, they will all come to Harley. There comes that point in life where they just want to get something comfortable. Ma pals came from fast bikes, they all ride Harleys now."* Whereas participant 20 describes the change from a more observant perspective in which he quotes other members of the Harley-Davidson community: *"There's people that come in, and always hated them. But it's true once you ride one you just buy one. I think it's Harley Forum UK, it's the only forum I'm on and there's quite a few who say, 'I've always had bikes and went to Harley a couple of years ago and I would never go back*

again.” And you know it will always be Harley-Davidson for me.” Similarly, participant 12 said *“All ma life I hated Harleys. Absolutely hated them. Aye. But now that I’m getting older. It’s just the cycle of life you just get a Harley at the end.”* This is further supported by participant 11: *“I think the older guys, in the past seen ma Harley and said to me “What the hell a Harley? That’s an old man’s bike.” Two, three years down the line they all got Harleys. They all jumped on the bandwagon.”*

So, we see a process that is present within consumption through the ages and must be considered an important element of a progression within the motorcycle environment.

4.4 Safety

As stated, Harley-Davidson motorcycles are not built for speed and this is part of the appeal of the motorcycles produced by the American brand. It is about the journey rather than the destination. However, despite this romanticised image, there is a pragmatic reason. A Harley-Davidson motorcycle is a heavy motorcycle even smaller versions such as the Sportster are still heavy in comparison to other motorbikes of a similar type. The Road King one of the heavier bikes on offer, weighs nearly 350kg. This offers a ‘lorry’ feeling and even concern amongst new Harley consumers, *“it scared the shit out of me”⁷* as participant 24 stated. Despite such first emotions, riders generally see their Harleys as a safer alternative to other Bikes solely based on speed. According to the consumers a Harley-Davidson needs to be treated differently to other motorcycles Participant 11 of the motorcycle cluster outlines that in order *“to make a Harley-Davidson run smooth you must treat it as a Harley-Davidson. Don’t treat it as an (R1), cause if you treat it as an (R1) or as a racey bike it won’t do you. It won’t do you good. You need to treat it as a Harley and it will respond.”* So, a significant reduction in speed and risk is demanded of the consumer as otherwise the Risks of having an accident increases if a Speed is exceeded at which the Motorcycle, not the Rider, feels comfortable. Participant 4 compares the Harley rider’s attitude to other motorcyclists: *“I think there is less risk with a Harley. Cause you usually ride in groups and it’s noisy. And you are not going fast, ehm, and I’ve had Sports bikes that you just hammer all the time and you get home and think ‘Fuck, how did I live through that’. Every single weekend you come back fucking hammered in your head. But you’re*

⁷ Whilst explicit language it has been decided to not alter this expression as it reflects a strong emotional expression.

*riding a Harley, you're taking a risk. Two wheels. But, but, you're cruising. Not hammering.*⁸ Here again, the noise of the bike is also linked to safety.

Others have placed their age and ability in relation to safety, as seen in the following examples:

- Participant 15: *"It's always risky. That's why I also like Harley, you can hear the thing coming a mile away. Loud pipes save lives. Like I drive down a straight road and with a different bike a car can just pull out in front of you, but with Harley they can hear you coming and just stay and wait until you're past."*
- Participant 21: *"At my age, you don't want to be leaning over a Sports bikes at my age. Too old for that."*
- Participant 23: *"I like the style of the bikes. I feel too old for Sports bikes, Harleys are just a bit more serious and mature."*

4.4.1 Less Risk to Ride a Harley

The perceived reduced risk involved in riding a Harley-Davidson in comparison to other motorcycle types are also seen in the non-motorcycle cluster, with participant 2 stating *"I've never looked into the statistics, they look and feel safer because of the riding position than other types"*. Additionally, participant 3 of the non-motorcycle cluster adds *"Yeah, I imagine it to be an easier bike to drive"*. In relation to the argument that the size of the Motorcycle is in direct related to safety and risk, participant 14 states *"They quite big as well, when it comes to size of them that would make me feel a bit safer I think"*.

Others are supporting this statement by saying:

- Participant 3: *"I think we are more probably more cautious in the way that we ride and risk, especially on the roads. Cause we are so used to having (gloves),*

⁸ Whilst explicit language it has been decided to not alter this expression as it reflects a strong emotional expression.

30 years I was in the service you attended so many fatalities, so many involving bikes.”

- Participant 8: *“I think it depends on your age, your friends and on your outlook. And it depends on the type of motorcycle your ride. I wouldn’t class Harley as a high-risk motorcycle.”*
- Participant 10: *“I think any kind of sport motorcycling can be risky. But I always have my protective clothing on so I’m trying to limit it.”*
- Participant 11: *“It’s like anything else. You got to be alert even more when you’re riding a bike. You got to be visually watching everybody, especially when you come to a T-junction you got to make eye contact with that person whether he’s driving a van or a lorry just so that you can say “I’m here!” and I’ve got my lights on and I’m coming through. You got to be very alert when you’re riding a bike.”*
- Participant 13: *“I’d say with more traffic and that there’s a lot more risk involved with more traffic being involved.”*
- Participant 19: *“It makes you more aware. It makes me more road aware. I’ve had two accidents before, so it makes you even more aware, especially junctions, roundabouts, and the environment that you’re riding in.”*
- Participant 24: *“I think people who are riding bikes they know of the dangers, but they are trying to limit them as much as possible, especially with Harleys you don’t tend to take them.”*

4.5 Risk

An important aspect that has to be taken into consideration is the impact of risks that motorcyclists take within their hedonic environment. Risks involved with motorcycling are undeniably present, based on the exposure a motorcyclist has in comparison to a car. Risk is clearly a factor preventing non-motorcyclists from participating in motorcycling.

4.5.1 Risk Attitude

The risk attitude differs between the two clusters, as one group has been part of the motorcycle world for a prolonged period of time and understands and accepts the risks that are involved. Whilst the non-motorcycle cluster states that the risks involved with motorcycling are one of the most common reasons why they do not take up motorcycling.

4.5.2 Risk Perception of Harley-Davidson/ Understanding of involved Risks

During the interview phase the previously hypothesised impact of risks was demonstrated as it appears that risk was not significant to motorcyclists, *“It’s dangerous getting out of bed in the morning, so risk is not an issue”* as participant 21 stated or *“you just got to take some risks”*, Participant 7. It appears to be a common theme that the risk of motorcycling is accepted, without ignoring it. Amongst the interviewees, a great awareness of the dangers that come along with motorcycling is present and understood and accepted accordingly. Implementing Holt’s dimension of integration (1995) in which the consumer expresses levels of understanding of the environment and adapts their behaviour accordingly.

This understanding also needs to be looked into further and how it can be generated. The Harley-Davidson cluster has not taken up motorcycling as a hedonic experience recently, in fact, only one participant stated that he started motorcycling in his 40s. This indicates not just more training and participation but also shows the significance of motorcycling at a young age for consumption in later years. The mean age to start motorcycling was 18. This indicates that an early decision to accept the risk to be on a motorcycle has a significant impact on decisions and purchasing behaviour in the future.

This argument is strengthened by two points mentioned by a variety of Participants of the non-motorcycle cluster in which they frequently state that had thought about obtaining a motorcycle license in their younger years but decided against:

- Participant 1: *“Yeah, I have been a few times. Probably, ehm, possibly when I was 16, when you kinda want that freedom. And then again when I was, ehm, mid- 20s and then again when I was 40ish.”*
- Participant 3: *“Very, very briefly in my teenage years”*

- Participant 7: *"I would have considered prior to being married. Now that I have- now that I'm married and have children I wouldn't. I see it as a slightly dangerous occupation"*
- Participant 12: *"I did, years ago yeah. But I got a car license that suits me more. And also the way that car drivers treat people on motorcycles and bicycles I'd rather not get in anything else"*
- Participant 19: *"I'd have fancied buying one, yeah. You know, you go and look at them when you see them in the street. I quite fancied it, but I never actually had the opportunity to go and buy one"*

Others claimed that the thought of obtaining a license never crossed their mind or that they preferred to focus on a car. However, the statement of participant 7 is of significance which may also impact other potential consumer decision making processes. This is the time-related decision and at what stage they are in their lives which holds them back in regard to risk-seeking hedonic consumption. It is not a bad approach as the focus and priorities are different than when a family becomes involved.

An example of this impact can also be found in the Harley-Davidson cluster. Participant 3 who started to ride motorbikes when he was 14 without a license and then from 16 years of age with a license. He was *"on and off riding"* but the last couple of years waited until his children were old enough. This was also in relation to another risk factor, the monetary risks, discussed in the next segment. He stated: *"I would say- because as I say I had left it until my kids and family have grown up, sort of moved out, left home, so I had some disposable income. A bit more flexible."*

This particular approach to start motorcycling when young, then stopping for family reasons as outlined by participant 3. He additionally goes into further detail and shows his wife's perception of motorcycling. *"I kinda floated that idea and you know got her thoughts and interests. It was a bit strange because when we were young, ehm, my wife used to go on the bikes with me and then obviously children came along and we got rid of bikes for a wee while and when I got the first Harley, I thought she would want to go back on the bikes but at that time she said "No, I don't enjoy it."* Having children seems to be a key motivator and only based on the change in situation that his children are older he decided to return to his hobby, although his partner is not participating with him anymore but still supports his decision to return to his hobby (*"I*

did go as I say, she is a supporter of me getting a bike. If she would be totally against it, it probably have never happened.”). Participant 3 of the Harley-Davidson Cluster will be used later on to establish a model of consumption processes for Harley-Davidson consumers.

4.5.3 Monetary Risks

When looking at motorcycling, two main risk factors need to be included and perceived as potential influencing reasons. Both need to be accepted, but as already outlined in the Literature Review segment (see 1.7.4 for reference), this acceptance already takes place when obtaining a License as not just awareness of the involved risks is being taught but it is also indicative of the willingness to buy a motorcycle. The only question remaining is the amount they are willing to spend on a motorcycle. Harley-Davidson offers motorcycles on the top end of the price range and therefore needs to be further specified in what way the monetary risks may be an influencing factor for or against the consumption of this particular brand. In regard to the purchasing costs, a comparison will be made between the Harley-Davidson cluster and the non-motorcycle cluster. However, for aspects such as further investment or impacts on the home life of the Harley Rider the non-motorcycle cluster has little insight.

4.5.3.1 Purchase cost

As already established, Harley-Davidson is at the top end of purchasing costs and is seen as so by Outsiders. Harley is seen as the Rolls-Royce of motorcycles according to the non-motorcycle cluster Participants underlined the significance of the position Harley-Davidson has. Harley-Davidson consumers are often seen as of a highly successful standard such as doctors or lawyers, this aspect is mentioned by Participant 11 of the non-motorcycle cluster who states that, *“everyone knows that they are just accountants and lawyers et cetera being cowboys on the weekends”*. However, this is countered by participant 11 of the Harley-Davidson cluster who in turn outlines his lengthy personal experience with the motorcycle environment and states that: *“Oh you see, believe it or not, they say that Harley-Davidson is full of doctors. Full of this and full of that. I've not met a doctor yet. Or a professor or a scientist. I've just met ordinary guys.”* Consumption of Harley-Davidson is often related to success and wealth by outsiders; therefore, it appears only logical that successful and wealthy people buy a Motorcycle of that calibre, similar comparisons

can be made in the automotive industry of cars with brand names such as Porsche, Mercedes-Benz, or Ferrari. However, as participant 11 of the Harley-Davidson cluster states, it is not a common reoccurrence to meet somebody of that professional standing.

This does not take away from the price tag of purchasing a Harley-Davidson. Participant 11 mentions a wonderful saying, *“HD means a Hundred Dollars” (HD meaning Harley-Davidson)*. Participant 16 of the Harley-Davidson cluster shows his expertise in the following manner. When focusing on the price tag that comes along with purchasing a Harley-Davidson he states: *“My experience is definitely the price difference. First of all, the bikes, you know, they are all a lot of money, but Harleys are more expensive to buy. And again, when you come to the clothing and accessories et cetera they are more expensive than standard, you know, leathers. So, I think it does appeal, it does attract premium customers. In some cases. Some people work hard and save up to buy their Harley.”* Further investments will be discussed later on, under 4.5.3.2. Participant 3 outlined that the purchasing costs involved with buying a Harley-Davidson prevented him from buying another Harley as he states: *“Again, because they are quite expensive and there are a lot of other bikes. It was really just financial reasons why I don’t buy another.”*

However, Participant 24 establishes that there is a difference between the assumed costs and the actual purchasing costs of a Harley-Davidson as he states that *“sometimes people think that they can’t afford it when they actually could. And just think that it’s too expensive”*. Supporting this, Participant 4 reflects on his purchasing process: *“Well, actually I came in to buy another - I was looking for a second hand bike but they had a deal on. And I decided to buy the Harley, cause I never thought I could afford a Harley-Davidson. But they had the best deal on, that everybody gets nowadays. [...] It’s easier to buy, cause it’s cheaper payments per month.”* Whilst affordability deals may be an influencing factor to motivate consumers, other aspects need to be considered which will facilitate consumption.

4.5.3.2 Trading In (Reduction of Purchasing Costs/ Financial Risks)

One of the factors that influences the consumption process is the trading in an old motorcycle in return for a new or second hand Harley-Davidson. Generally, Harley consumers have been riding motorcycles since their teenage years and already own a motorbike at the time of the purchase. This came to light when asked about the saving up process prior to the purchase. Rather than paying in cash, participant 13

describes an emotionless transaction in which he leaves with a Harley-Davidson: *"I sold some bikes and just traded it in."* As it becomes clear it does not solely mean swapping the motorcycle at a Harley-Davidson dealership but also includes private sales in order to accumulate the necessary funding. Participant 16 has a similar approach: *"I traded it in. In here actually. And got another one"*. Participant 19 also described it quite straightforwardly: *"Well, I traded my bike in. And put the rest on finance"*. Others develop a habit of trying out different models and experiences by changing their Harley-Davidson on a regular basis such as participant 21 (*"That's the second Harley. The first Harley I traded in here and put some cash to it."*) or participant 24 who funds his regular changes predominantly through this approach (*"I think it was six or seven. It was six actually. Like you see, we come in here once a week and then you just see a new model that you like and just want to have it. And then you just trade in your other one and put a little more on top and then it's yours."*). The term "little" indicates the unimportance of the monetary investment required for him to add to his consumption experience when focusing on Harley-Davidson.

Looking at this approach, which is frequently used by Harley-Davidson consumers, adds to the lack of input required from them in order to purchase their lifestyle as a Harley rider. When looking at the issue through the lens of monetary risk it can be stated that only the first motorbike requires a significant investment as later on the transaction will differ in the sense that the consumer exchanges one motorcycle for another and is only required to *"put a little more on top and then it's yours."*, thus, further reducing the monetary risks involved, despite the common outsider perception that Harley-Davidson bikes are for wealthy consumers.

4.5.3.2.1 Sudden Wealth

On the subject of money and spending behaviour, it is important to regard sudden changes in income that may impact the consumption in a positive or negative manner. These changes can be through inheritance, unexpected savings, or unexpectedly finding a significant amount that may have been forgotten about. Although the latter appears to be very rare and was previously not considered in the focus of the study nevertheless it appeared to have an impact for one participant.

The stories of two participants tell two of these three aspects. When looking at unexpected savings participant 16 appears to be an example to focus on as he had saved a significant amount for his daughter's wedding. When his savings appeared to be more than the actual cost, he used the money left over to purchase a Harley-

Davidson. As participant 16 states: *“As I say, I was getting ready for a new bike. Ma daughter got married and didn’t cost as much as I expected. So, I had some money, so I just bought one”*. Participant 16 considered that the money he saved as already spent on his daughter’s wedding, so it was less emotionally stressful for him to spend the money on purchasing a Harley-Davidson.

When looking at the other potentially less frequent options of finding money and reaching sudden unexpected wealth which may also trigger consumption in a positive manner. Unexpected wealth can be compared to a lottery win than the other two can be. Participant 9 described his purchase intentions as follows: *“I planned to get one when I turn 60. I thought it’s either when I turn 60 or when I’m down to 13 Stone then I’ll buy a Harley. But then I found five grand in my filing cabinet so thought; ‘Fuck it’⁹. I thought I can afford a bike before I turn 60 so I’m going to get it now.”* Participant 9 already planned to purchase a Harley-Davidson before finding the money in a filing cabinet, the consumption was merely accelerated through the unexpected finding of £5.000 in a cabinet (as Participant 9 states in his own words: *“but then I found five grand in my filing cabinet so thought ‘Fuck it’¹⁰”).*

It is an important point that both participants 9 & 16 had the prior intention to purchase a Harley-Davidson. However, the sudden wealth allowed them to reach that target more quickly than originally expected or intended. Participant 9 excluded the causality of his age or weight loss target and utilised the found money in a personally satisfying manner. Similarly, participant 16’s unexpected savings were utilised to accelerate or upgrade his pre-existing plan of *“getting ready for a new bike.”*

In comparison, the non-motorcycle cluster used sudden wealth in a similar way, such as participant 13, who stated: *“I got a brand new drive that I paid with money that I inherited.”* This outlines that the sudden change in wealth enhances consumption in a manner that may have been desired before but did not occur. It signals a motivation and intent. Through the change of income, these thoughts are expressed more freely by the completion of the consumption intention.

⁹ Whilst explicit Language it has been decided to not alter this Expression as it reflects a strong emotional expression.

¹⁰ Whilst explicit Language it has been decided to not alter this Expression as it reflects a strong emotional expression.

4.5.3.3 Further Investments (Customizations)

As discussed, the world of Harley-Davidson strongly supports customisation, supporting Holt's four dimensions of consumption (1995) in particular the approach of consumption as integration in which the experience of the product is altered in a personal way for the Consumer. This reflection of consumption as integration is strongly embedded amongst Harley-Davidson consumers. The alterations made are based on two factors which are (1) comfort for the rider, (2) modification to make it more suitable to the taste of the rider. Both approaches are taken into consideration and combined here under the name of customisation. The alterations made by the Consumers are not always made with official Harley-Davidson products but can also occur through third party suppliers, such as Vance & Hince exhaust systems.

These additional costs need to be considered in order to understand the financial risks that are involved with the purchase of a Harley-Davidson and its subcultural environment. According to the participants of the motorcycle cluster costs are on average £1.888 with the highest being £12.000 on a single Harley-Davidson Motorcycle (Participant 6) and the lowest £0 (Participants 8 & 21).

This does not include maintenance and general running costs such as insurance or petrol but only customisations ordered by the consumer to make the motorbike more comfortable or modify it to their personal taste. Additionally, customisation possibilities are endless, as according to participant 15 "*A Harley is never complete*".

Customisation of the motorcycles of Harley-Davidson was not mentioned by any participant of the non-motorcycle cluster as an attribute of Harley-Davidson. This supports the notion that a Harley is seen for what it is, and not the price tag related to the customisations.

4.5.3.4 Impact on home life (what did the Wife/ Partner say)

A motorcycle can have a significant impact on home life, and home life itself impacts on the purchase of a motorcycle. This needs to be considered differently for each cluster based on the difference in the stage of consumption. The Harley-Davidson has executed consumption whereas the non-motorcycle cluster has not.

The following examples indicate the influences the home factors may have on the consumption of a high-risk leisure activity such as motorcycling. The non-motorcycle cluster indicated why the consumption had not occurred with various reasons;

- Participant 7: *"I would have considered prior to being married. Now that I have- now that I'm married and have children I wouldn't. I see it as a slightly dangerous occupation."*
- Participant 14: *"Cause married and three kids. It changes your whole outlook."*
- Participant 19: *"It's actually because I got married. And I was a driver for the Royal Mail. And I had kids so it all kinda went that way. And it's safer, it's more safety for the kids."*
- Participant 22: *"married and having children makes you sort of more risk averse."*

When looking at the Harley-Davidson cluster another understanding needs to be present in order to have the willingness to accept the involved risks and therefore endanger their families. The Harley-Davidson subculture is a male-dominated environment, but whilst the man is purchasing and riding the motorcycle the pillion seat can often be given to their partner. This can also be seen from the experiences shared by participants 5, a husband and wife couple. This leads to an inclusion of both male and female consumers. As outlined by participants 13, 22, and 24 in the following manner:

- Participant 13: *"I mean me and ma wife, when we are out on the bikes we are just enjoying it."*
- Participant 22: *"Ma wife likes Harleys more than she likes Triumphs or Jap Bikes. She likes that style more. Apart from the noise, the neighbours are not big fans of that."*
- Participant 22: *"Ma wife is brilliant and is also quite into bikes and is very supportive of the whole thing."*
- Participant 24: *"The wife's part of it, ma wife's included in it."*

Additionally, the support that is being given from their female Partners includes consent to the purchase but also the limiting of future investments as with participant 1: *"And my wife looked at me and said "Out of all them ones what would you have", I said "I'll have that one 'cause that's within budget, which I think was about five and a*

half grand". She said, *"I don't want you buying that and then coming back to me next year saying that you want another one"*. Similarly, participant 12 stated: *"In fact ma wife keeps saying "Get another one, get the one that you want"*. Other participants indicated that as long as it does not impact their financial situation and pushes them into financial struggle their partners remain supportive. For example, participant 20 said: *"No, ma wife's very accommodating, if I can afford it and it didn't affect holidays or bills, I can buy whatever I want to. She's very supportive."* The general support of the partner can be found quite regularly, participant 10: *"I'm lucky enough that ma wife loves motorcycles as well."*

However, whilst some partners appear supportive and are included in the consumption process, others have a different influence, primarily when the partner does not want to ride or to be included in the subcultural activities. For instance, participants 15 and 19 stated:

- Participant 15: *"I took the passenger seat off cause the wife wasn't going much so I took that off."*
- Participant 19: *"The wife hates them anyway, so she doesn't like them."*

Others acknowledge a motorbike can be a source of tension in a relationship, participant 21: *"I don't have a wife, so I don't have to argue."*

4.5.3.5 Compromises

When focusing on family involvement in the decision-making process one more aspect needs to be considered, compromise. This is not for the Harley consumer in relation to his motorcycle but is connected to a delayed compensation to return something to their Partner in a similar fashion. Participant 10 illustrated this point as followed: *"I had to buy me wife a caravan. No, because I was doing I do so much stuff riding at weekends and she won't go on the back. She has nothing to do with it. To give her the same I bought a static caravan down in Berwick where she goes and takes the dogs there for the weekend cause the kids are at an age where to look after themselves, so she goes down there. I do as well sometimes but I go on the bike and then go out from there."* It not only outlines the Home involvement in the decision-making process but also the need to compensate for the purchase with further purchases. This may be less relevant to consumers who ride with their partner as pillion, as they both enjoy the activity of motorcycling together.

4.6 Subcultural Connections

When looking at the Harley-Davidson the factor of the establishment of subcultural connections must not be disregarded. Although there may be expectations for these connections, they can only occur after consumption, so, connections are created in a post-purchase environment. Additionally, it further outlines influences of an exterior form that may support consumption in a positive manner. As outlined in the section 4.3, peer pressure can be of a negative nature. However, this section will focus on positive reinforcement for consumption. These can include friends supporting the purchase of a Harley by talking about their own experiences thus facilitating the consumption, such as Participant 12 who recounted that there is a direct connection between his friends stories and his desire to participate in the subcultural environment of Harley-Davidson: *"I bought a Harley cause ma pal is in a Club, it's the lifestyle that you get with Harleys and so on"*. He expands on this: *"Ma pal just bought a new bike. It's like "keeping up with the Joneses" sort of style, seeing what have you got so and then buying something as well to keep up with it."*

However, prior to the purchase, it remains solely an idea that subcultural connections will occur as desired. Nevertheless, the consumer's fantasy creation of that outcome needs to be regarded as an influence. The desire to be part of the Harley-Davidson community is key to the appeal. The impact of this idea of community on decision-making can be vividly seen in participant's 24 description of his entry into the community: *"I used to ride scooters but left it for a long time and then went to Thunder in the Glen so I thought I get into biking. And then I bought a Harley."* His perception of the subcultural community enhanced his desire to purchase a Harley-Davidson which allowed him to be further integrated into that environment.

4.6.1 Establishment of new connection

The establishment of new connections through the consumption of Harley-Davidson products is a significant motivator for consumption. Furthermore, the story of each rider is different but there is general consensus that the community adds to the consumption experience and is an integral part of Harley-Davidson's appeal. The social life offered to Harley-Davidson consumers even exceeds the expectations of some consumers. This is not limited to the Harley-Davidson owner groups but also to all other groups centred around Harley-Davidson. Here, participants describe their

experiences of establishing new connections through the consumption and active participation with Harley-Davidson:

- Participant 7: *"I always enjoy coming here. You always have friendly people around who you can talk to. I've noticed that camaraderie of people who ride Harleys, of Harley owners, are much nicer people, are much more willing to help, much more outgoing than any other organised group of people that are associated with another brand. I think that most definitely."*
- Participant 24: *"Well, it gets you a lot of friends that I wouldn't have met if I wouldn't have a Harley-Davidson. I wouldn't have met any of my friends if I wouldn't be here, all through here. A lot of my friends were based in Glasgow. I got the bike, I got into the chapter, met several people from Edinburgh. None of us were in the group. It's got a really good social life and that's quite important I would say."*
- Participant 24: *"I bought it in Glasgow. And then joined the Clyde Valley Chapter there because I didn't know they had a Chapter over here as well. But once I realised that, I moved over. I made some friends in Glasgow but over here are my real group of friends."*
- Participant 5: *"On a working day, especially the state he looks (referring to her husband). It's quite funny, because one of the very top officers in Fettes ((Police HQ)) like one of the top three, ehm, is actually heavily into bikes and a good friend. So, you get on with one of those officers in a lift and they make cracks."*
- Participant 5: *"And there's a lot of people that we know, lovely individuals, you know, friends that we've met. Through different things in eh, Harley. And I call them weekend warriors."*
- Participant 2: *"Met loads of pals. Started Facebook 3 months ago, never been on Facebook before and just met hundreds of pals through that."*

The comments from Participants 5 and 24 are particularly interesting. It appears that the environment created by the Harley-Davidson consumers offers its members an open surrounding in which they can express themselves and behave freely. It further appears to diminish geographical barriers, as with participants 24; or social standing in the outside community, as with participant 5. These findings strongly correlate with the assumption that the Harley-Davidson unites its consumers by forming a bond in which "a welder can sit down with a bank president and speak the same language" (Herzog, 1993). Additionally, it indicates that the geographic locations are irrelevant

to Harley consumers as similarities can be identified between Schembri's research (2009) and the present research at hand.

4.6.2 Further extension

Whilst this motivation can be seen as significant, for some participants in the research the post-purchase lifestyle developed even further from there. Two participants (23 and 24) have outlined that they are both part of the "Widow's Son" a Masonic Harley-Davidson chapter which supports charities. The significance of the development of the post-purchase life is highlighted by participant 24 statement: *"If I'm honest if I didn't have a bike I wouldn't be in the Masons."* Thus, strongly connecting the two events into the identity of the consumer.

4.6.3 Not everyone is part of a motorcycle club

During the data collection it became apparent that not every member of the Harley-Davidson community is a member of a motorcycle club, as previously assumed. From 16 participants who were asked questions regarding a club affiliation, 10 participants said that they were either part the Harley-Davidson Owner Group or a member of a separate club. This leaves 6 participants without any club affiliation. Examples can be found by the statements of the following participants:

- Participant 6: *"I'm not a club person."*
- Participant 11: *"I was in a cruiser club, the Caledonian Cruiser Club and they folded, and I never ever went to another club."*
- Participant 19: *"I'm not a fa- I don't have many friends that got bikes, so I didn't join a club or anything like that."*
- Participant 22: *"I don't go to clubs or anything of that sort. It's purely personal and personal use."*

This outlines that not every Harley consumer is a club member and they generate their own participation out of their consumption.

Others are outlining it as an important part of Harley's appeal, as seen in the following examples:

- Participant 10: *"That is also a difference to the Goldwing. Obviously, the Goldwing is no noise, it's just so quiet. It's not the same. There's a Honda Club in Glasgow. But there's no other manufacturer who does what Harley does."*

- Participant 12: *"I bought a Harley cause ma pal is in a Club, it's the lifestyle that you get with Harleys and so on."*

4.7 Optimistic/ Pessimistic

When looking at the impact of emotions on consumer behaviour, one approach needs to be considered in the discussion. This approach is the consumers' personal perception and understanding of life, if he perceives himself as having a positive or negative outlook. However, this should be discussed with caution as it is something which can change even on a daily basis, i.e. optimists may state that they are pessimistic if they are currently in a stressful period and vice versa. Nevertheless, it is important to focus on the answers given by both clusters and perceive them as accurate at the time of the Interview.

Results	H-D Cluster		Non-motorcycle cluster	
	Amount	in % (≈)	Amount	in %
Optimistic	16	67%	10	42%
Pessimistic	1	4%	14	58%
Other	1	4%	0	0%
N/A	6	25%	0	0%
Excluding N/A	-----			
Optimistic	16	89%	10	42%
Pessimistic	1	6%	14	58%
Other	1	6%	0	0%
Total	24	100%	24	100%

Table 4.2: Optimism vs. Pessimism

4.7.1 Optimistic

During the interview with the Harley-Davidson cluster, Participants were asked whether they perceive themselves as optimistic or as pessimistic. The results for that particular question were as follows: 89% see themselves as more optimistic and have a more optimistic outlook on life. Only one stated that they are more pessimistic (6%). One participant (6%) stated that he accepts the things in the way they are and therefore is more of a realist, classified under "Other".

So as not to disrupt the flow of the interview, as the primary focus was to hear the participants story with Harley-Davidson, 6 participants were not asked this question,

which results in 25% of all Participants. Nevertheless, the answers supplied by the majority of participants illustrate a general consensus of optimism amongst Harley-Davidson consumers.

This may be linked to the risks that they are willingly accepting in order to participate in motorcycling. This optimistic outlook can be seen as a controlling factor in their consumption in which they are more willing to accept risk. Statements such as *“It’s dangerous getting out of bed in the morning, so risk is not an issue.”* from Participant 21 strengthen their optimistic approach. It may be easier for motorcyclists to think more positively rather than being paralysed by the fears of motorcycling. It is possible to relate the experienced happiness and satisfaction to the consumers’ positive perception. Statements such as *“You wouldn’t do it if it wouldn’t put a smile on your face, would you?”* from Participant 16 illustrate the satisfaction in the consumption and ultimately the connection between satisfaction and the personal perception of the consumer.

4.7.2 Pessimistic

The results differed significantly for the non-motorcycle cluster. Only 42% of participants stated that they had an optimistic outlook. 14 respondents (58%) with a more pessimistic perception seems attention arising for the study and needs to be taken into consideration.

Whilst it would be easy to state that in order to be more optimistic one needs to take up motorcycling, it would be erroneous to do so. A potential reason for the more pessimistic responses received can be based on the progression of the interview in which participants were asked about motorcyclists and the risks involved in the leisure activity of motorcycling. Whilst it was not an intended influence introduced by researcher, it may have brought out a more negative perception of the participants current attitude and outlook.

Nevertheless, the difference in attitude is significant and can be directly connected to the risk perception of the participants. Motorcyclists appear to have a more positive outlook as otherwise they would not participate in the high-risk leisure activity of motorcycling. Whilst the non-motorcyclist may state their pessimism through their heightened risk evaluation of motorcycling, stating it as the main reason for not to partake. A close connection to Kahneman and Tversky’s approach of anchoring as a

heuristic bias can be made, in which one's perception of an object impacts the perception of the risks involved in it. In this case, this would result in Harley-Davidson consumers to underestimate the involved risks by applying a more optimistic approach, whereas non-motorcyclists may appear to be overestimating the risks involved with motorcycling based on their personal perception and adding their pessimism as a psychological indicator.

4.8 Outsider understanding and perception of motorcyclists and Harley riders

4.9 Progression of Consumption

Previous research has not addressed the reasons for consumption in relation to the four dimensions of consumption. These four dimensions; integration, classification, and play only occur in a post-purchase environment and prior to this, participation all remains a fantasy of the consumer. This form of fantasy that occurs prior to the purchase and is likely a strong motivator. Starting from the simple approach of the connection between age and brand and considering Harley-Davidson as what it is, the 'old man brand'. Throughout their lives, all but one of the participants, owned motorbikes before purchasing a Harley-Davidson. Participant 2 stated *"I'd just pick the bike that I'd fancy at the time"*, this particular participant was always very cautious of Harley but eventually triggered his imagination in some way that made him purchase the bike. With age, various things change, and motorcyclists adapt to their possibilities. A form of natural progression can be identified in which the consumer experiences developments from their own standpoint and adjusts to it accordingly. Participant 18, echoes many participants' feelings when he states that Harley-Davidson allowed him to *"stay on two wheels"* because of the way their motorbike is constructed. Others are outlining their progression as followed:

- Participant 4: *"I don't like the white-knuckle stuff anymore. I'm too old for that."*
- Participant 12: *"All ma life I hated Harleys. Absolutely hated them. Aye. But now that I'm getting older. It's just the cycle of life you just get a Harley at the end."*

- Participant 21: *"You don't want to be leaning over a Sports bikes at my age. Too old for that."*
- Participant 23: *"I feel too old for Sports bikes, Harleys are just a bit more serious and mature."*

4.9.1 Start to Finish

It necessarily follows that a timeline is constructed, which may vary from consumer to consumer but ultimately motorcycle consumers follow it in one way or another. Speed appears to be of high importance to young riders but this fades somewhat and there is a new desire for enjoyable comfort. Motorcycles such as sport-tourers or Enduro bikes are more comfortable and are purpose-built to explore. However, there comes a later stage comfort where the comfort of the bike takes priority and speed is now irrelevant to the consumer. As participant 14 describes the peer pressure he received for buying a Harley-Davidson; *"You can't go on this, it's an old man's bike."* However, he adds that these friends are all riding a Harley now.

The progression towards this particular brand exceeds the normal understanding of like or dislike but rather gives riders an opportunity in which they can continue to ride in a way that is suitable for their current situation and ability. The following statements further support this:

- Participant 16 (HD): *"I've been biking all ma life. You know all ma friends started off on like Sports tourers, Sports bikes you know and a lot of us have Harleys now."*
- Participant 15 (HD): *"Yeah I think the next generation is not motorcycling as much, and if they do they just want to go fast. That comes with age. I was never into fast bikes, I always loved Harleys. But eventually they will all come to Harley. There comes that point in life where they just want to get something comfortable. Ma pals came from fast bikes, they all ride Harleys now."*

4.9.2 Progression from the Progression

The purchase of a Harley is only a step on the ladder in the consumers motorcycling career. For many, it is not the final step on the ladder. 7 of the 24 participants outlined

specific contingency plans for the period after Harley-Davidson. They state that they would consider purchasing a Trike (three-wheeler motorcycle) once they lose the physical capabilities to handle and control a heavy motorcycle such as a Harley-Davidson. Some specified that they would purchase a Harley-Davidson trike but will not limit themselves to it.

The desire to “stay in the saddle” is an important underlying factor. Harley-Davidson offers the means through which the ageing consumer can achieve this. In one instance, the participant stated that he already owns a Trike. This is due to his physical capabilities and he switches between the Harley-Davidson and the Trike depending on his abilities on the day. Others outline that this contingency plan gives them a continued satisfaction riding a motorcycle. Participant 4 states this problem clearly by describing his contingency plan in relation to age and physical capabilities as followed: *“Where is my fun going to come from? So I got my plan, I’ll get a Trike. So, if I can’t walk properly or so, so at least I’ll manage to run around on a Trike.”*

Others are indicating a similar approach:

- Participant 4: *“I might end up on a trike. In fact I’m worried about stopping. Actually, it’ll depress me. Because that’s my hobby and my life and I’ve got a passion for it. And the day I can’t do that would be “Fuck, what do I do now?”, you know. What am I going to do? You know. Where is my fun going to come from? So, I got my plan, I’ll get a trike, so if I can’t walk properly or so, so at least I’ll manage to run around on a trike”*
- Participant 10: *“I can always go on a trike when I need to.”*
- Participant 13: *“Until I can’t do it anymore from a physical side. But eventually get a trike once I’ve reached. [...] Yeah, that’s my contingency plan. I got a Trike at the moment which is fun as well. “*
- Participant 20: *“If I get too old and my knees give up then I’ll trike it”*

This description clearly states the correlation between the hedonic aspects of the motorcycling environment in connection to age and strengthening the notion of the natural progression of consumption within the Harley-Davidson subculture.

4.9.3 Age but not time

There is a strong stereotype for outsiders of the middle-aged man purchasing a Harley due to a mid-life crisis.

- Participant 1: *"the thing with Harley I think it's this safe mid-life crisis bike."*
- Participant 3: *"You know yourself, there's something that might happen. And you review that."*
- Participant 15 (after being asked what comes to Mind when he thinks of Harley-Davidson: *"Well, mid-life crisis, would be, isn't it"*

However, this myth of the mid-life crisis is not being reflected in the Harley-Davidson Consumer. Actually, the motorcycle represents an opportunity to 'stay on two wheels' and participate in a community of people who share a similar interest. Participant 18 describes his entry to Harley as follows: *"In 2014 I was diagnosed with cancer. I've had a couple of different surgeries and various treatments to deal with it. The last surgery has damaged how my right leg works so I had to find a bike where I was feet forward"*. Harley-Davidson gave him the opportunity to not let cancer take away his long-term hobby. Similarly, health issues forced participant 14 to look for a different means to participate in the motorcycling world *"It was just the positioning on the bike. I didn't get cramped up. With other bikes the sitting position gives me cramps especially when I'm at traffic lights or so."*

The age of Harley riders is a reflection of the desire to remain on a motorcycle. Harley-Davidson is very seldom the first motorcycle one buys but it often the last one bought before stopping riding motorcycles.

4.10 No Regrets

After establishing the potential risks that a Harley consumer is placing himself in, both financial and household, we now consider if any regret is experienced with the purchase or if the consumer would change anything about their decision from the past. A common response to the question if they would do it all over again with the knowledge that they have now, or if they would like to change anything about their experience, was that they would decide to do it all over again. In fact, one common

wish is to have purchased a Harley earlier in their life and not have waited for as long as they did.

- Participant 1: *"Oh, I'd do it all over again and I'd do it earlier. I probably would have just told me mum "look this is what I am doing" or just doing it without her knowing cause she lived down south and would have never known. I made-met some amazing friends in the five years, like a whole new group of friends."*
- Participant 3: *"Oh yeah definitely, ehm, I mean if finances had been better earlier. Oh yeah if possible. I would have bought it earlier if it would have been possible, ehm, you know if I had some money on the running, I would have done."*
- Participant 6: *"Would I do it again? Oh Aye. Yes."*
- Participant 7: *"Absolutely. Yeah Absolutely. I'll be riding my bike several years down the line, I can't even think about stopping. "*
- Participant 8: *"Aye definitely. I wish I would have bought a Harley earlier though."*
- Participant 9: *"Yeah without a doubt. Definitely."*
- Participant 10: *"I probably would go into Harley-Davidson at a younger age."*
- Participant 11: *"No nothing differently. I would do it all over again. Yeah, I regret not having started earlier. Sooner rather than later because every day I'm getting older. And I'd rather have it sooner."*
- Participant 12: *"Oh god yes, I regret not doing it sooner. I shouldn't have waited until I was 55, I should have done it when I was 30."*
- Participant 13: *"Aye. I'd always have a Harley until I can't ride anymore."*
- Participant 17: *"Definitely."*
- Participant 19: *"Yes. Yes, definitely."*

- Participant 21: *"Time over again, probably would get into Harley's, most definitely. No regrets so far."*
- Participant 22: *"Aye, definitely."*

This is the view of the majority of interviewed participants, some indicated total satisfaction with their purchase process, such as participant 20 (*"No, I did it perfectly. Ehm, from the planning, from the fact that I was able to pay it cash. I doubled the money that I needed which meant I could buy the jacket, the helmet, the boots, the gloves."*) or a neutrality towards the brand of Harley-Davidson, as indicated by participant 2 (*"I'd just pick the bike that I'd fancy at the time. Regardless of the make."*). Participant 24 reflected on his purchasing behaviour since the purchase of his first Harley-Davidson and that he regrets purchasing as many motorcycles as he did, he outlines this aspect in the following manner: *"Would I do it all over again? Probably because I would have never met the guys that I met. I probably wouldn't buy as many bikes, I wouldn't spend that much money on it again."*

The common interpretation of Harley-Davidson as an "old-man's bike" impacts on consumers and the manner in which consumption is conducted. Instead of the question being "Why do middle-aged men buy a Harley-Davidson?" should be changed to "When do men buy a Harley-Davidson." The extrinsic forces in place, as established in Chapter 4.3, delay the consumption.

4.11 Benefits of the Post-Purchase life on the Consumer

After having the discussed the changes in a post-purchase lifestyle of the consumers through the increase of Social connection and possibilities for interaction, it is only fitting to look at other changes the purchase of a Harley-Davidson has on the consumer's personal life. Consumers stated that they experienced an increase in friends, as shown in Chapter 4.6. An extension to those changes and impacts can also be seen in the two participants joining the Masonic Harley Chapter of the "Widow's Sons". These changes are already significant. However, two participants established that the purchase of a Harley-Davidson had a far greater impact on their lives than they could have anticipated prior to the purchase. Participant 1 outlined that due to buying a Harley-Davidson he managed to reduce his alcohol intake significantly

as he would not spend his weekends or evenings at a local bar but instead uses that time to focus on his motorcycle either by riding or cleaning it. He formulates it in the following manner: *“Also, it had a big impact on me alcohol intake.”* and also giving an explanation for his statement by saying *“because obviously you can’t drink and drive, but all a guy can do is go out for a drink with his mates boozing at the weekends and then come home pissed... ehm... and my missus would then would go on about it when I came back in and now I can’t be arsed because I don’t do that now. I come home and that’s what she likes. I don’t get pissed anymore, really. Really, really had a positive, um... effect on me marriage. Saved me a lot of money. I would say me Harley probably paid for itself in the four years I’ve had it cause I don’t go out drinking. Obviously, a Friday, Saturday daytime, Saturday night, Sunday dinner time.”* He considers the benefits from various standpoints, he focuses on his health, marriage, and financial situation.

Participant 20 reflects on his purchase behaviour in the following manner: *“Anything else at that point in time when I bought the bike, ma wife said to me and she takes the pure mickey out of me now because I said, “I’m not buying into the lifestyle, I won’t do Harley-only events, I won’t get the tattoos”, and I’ve gone the complete opposite. Completely opposite. Even ma grandkids say it’s too much. You go in through the front door, there’s a big Harley-Davidson sort of rubber mat. There’s one there. There’s one up in the bedroom. I just gone nuts.”*

Harley-Davidson has a large impact on the behaviour patterns of its consumers. They are already accepting and understanding of the risk that they take in order to participate in the high-risk leisure activity of motorcycling but it additionally alters previous behaviours accordingly. For one it may have a beneficial effect on health, marriage, and potentially financial decision-making, as observed in Participant 1 of the Motorcycle Cluster. For others, it appears to have an impact on their consumption, despite previous motivation to not buy into the lifestyle of Harley-Davidson, as illustrated by the example of Participant 20.

4.12 Why does Harley-Davidson Consumption not always occur

The reasons why consumption does not occur allow insight into consumer behaviour from a different perspective. Two factors come into play when deciding whether to participate in motorcycling or not. A variety of participants of the non-motorcycle

cluster have outlined that they were interested in motorcycling, predominately in their youth but also other stages in their lives, as seen in the following responses:

- Participant 1: *"Yeah, I have been a few times. Probably, ehm, possibly when I was 16, when you kinda want that freedom. And then again when I was, ehm, mid-20s and then again when I was 40-ish."*
- Participant 3: *"Very, Very briefly in my teenage years."*
- Participant 7: *"I would have considered prior to being married now that I have- now that I'm married and have children I wouldn't. I see it as a slightly dangerous occupation."*

These responses need to be taken into consideration when discussing the reason consumption does not take place. Additionally, a variety of participants have indicated that they have an appreciation for motorcycling, e.g. watching MotoGP. Whilst an appreciation is present, participants enjoy more to be in an observing position rather than in active participation. Additionally, it outlines the connection between age and time, as they have considered motorcycling in their younger years but would not consider it now due to family reasons, seen strongly in Participant 7's response.

However, it would be too quick to generalise from there as similarities can be seen between Harley-Davidson respondents and non-motorcyclists. A comparison can be made between the stories of participant 6 of the non-motorcycle cluster and participant 1 of the Harley-Davidson cluster. This will outline the influence the family has on the potential consumer. Participant 6 recounted: *"No, not really. It's been part of conversations with my family for a long time, but I was persuaded by my parents that it's not really something I should do. [...] My father when he was doing his national service, he was a dispatch rider, so he was a professional motorbike rider and he spent a lot of his time when we were growing up telling us not to go anywhere near them and that they are too dangerous."*

Due to his father's involvement and advice, he discounted motorcycling as a leisure activity.

Participant 1 of the Harley-Davidson cluster describes a strong influence from his family to his decision-making process as well. His story is as follows: *"I rode when I was younger. But then I lost a friend, tragically, lost a friend when we were out, around*

18/19. My friend died, so then my mother asked me to stop... riding, which I did, and then my mother died about five years ago, so I started riding again."

The difference between the two participants is that participant 1 has been riding prior to his friend's accident which triggered the response of his mother to intervene and ask him to stop riding motorcycles, which he did until her death. He details that decision: *"Oh, I always dreamt of it. But I mean it's just a fact that once my mum died and she did leave me a couple of quid, so it was just... "Right, I've kept me promise", but, now I spend the money you left me to buy a bike."*

The promise has been kept for the lifetime of the participant's mother, however, as soon as she passed away he used the inheritance to purchase the Harley. A very different process to participant 6 of the non-motorcycle cluster who never took up motorcycles.

A further interesting case is participant 14 of the non-motorcycle cluster which illustrates the involvement of the family in the decision-making for the future, as he states: *"I've had the benefit of going on Motocross bikes when I was very young, as a child, when I was between the ages of 9 and 18. And it was on the basis that I would not ride a motorbike on the road because of the dangers."*

This example indicates the risk involved with motorcycling that prevents the majority of the non-motorcyclists participating, and also shows how youth can determine future decision-making. Participant 14 had to make a similar promise as Participant 1 of the Harley-Davidson cluster as he had to promise that he would not ride a motorcycle anymore after he got it *"out of his system"* through Motocross in his young years.

There are three points to be made when looking into the reasons why consumption does not occur in a similar manner for everyone. First and foremost is the interest in motorcycling, which, if is not present, consumption will not occur. Secondly, youth and the involvement of the participants' family appears highly significant in regard to the future consumption of motorcycles. Thirdly, risk perception and the willingness to enter this high-risk leisure activity has to be seen as the most dominant factor in decision-making, which is often related back to the family circumstances of the participant.

4.13 Travel expenses

As outlined in the Literature Review, experiential consumption allows a greater satisfaction to the consumer in comparison to materialistic consumption and is crucial to a study of Harley-Davidson. Whilst it is a material object, it facilitates experiential consumption such as long-rides or even taking the motorcycle on tours or holidays. Participant 20 reflects on his experiential consumption: Participant 20 (HD): *"We've been to the Harley Days this year for the first time. [...] Ehm, planning on Prague next year for the 115th ((Harley-Davidson 115th Anniversary)), we go to Thunder in the Glens next week. It just ehm- [...] Oh certainly, especially with holidays, it's more like "what Harley event can we tie into it?" Oh I got the bug bad."* Similarly, the experiences of participant 3 of the Harley-Davidson cluster reflects a similar approach to the motorcycles used as a means to travel rather than a materialistic consumption, as he states: *"I'm just back from the states cause I was over riding, done a tour over there. Just back about two weeks ago. Eh, initially flew into Las Vegas and went from Las Vegas out through Death Valley across to Yosemite, through Yosemite National Park, then from Yosemite we run right down through across little wee places to eventually get to San Francisco. Ehm. From San Francisco down the California Coast. (Scowered) the mountains by Los Angeles. Ehm, eventually picking up Route 66 back across, way across to Joshua National Park, Joshua Tree National Park, across to the (needles) and eventually back to Las Vegas."*

Whilst it can be argued that a level of expertise is indicated through the participation in such Harley events or tours, it also needs to be seen for what it is, which is a holiday.

When comparing consumption patterns with the non-motorcycle cluster it was often stated that they spend the majority of their disposable income on holidays. Participant 2 of the non-motorcycle cluster indicated his hedonic consumption as followed: *"Hockey takes up most of my time. I cycle, road cycling. Triathlon, skiing, and holidays is probably where the money goes."* Similarly, participant 4 showed his expenditures as followed, when asked what he spends most of his money on for his own enjoyment: *"Definitely going on holiday, trips abroad."* Participant 5 showed his hedonic spending in the following manner whilst also reflecting on his financial situation: *"So I have a set budget and I do savings and I do short-term savings but predominantly, the mortgage is still quite big so all my spare money basically goes into travel. We go around five times a year. We do some smaller city breaks and then we have a bigger holiday. And then a week in the sun. So all the spare cash goes into the holiday fund."*

Participant 10 showed impulsive behaviour when it came to spending money as he states: *“It depends what you class as a purchase, so for me I do impulsively spend a lot of money on holidays”*. Participant 14 described similar spending behaviour: *“We spend a good chunk on holidays”*.

The motorcycle can be seen as a means to achieve the desired holiday and is a reason to travel to certain events and locations where the motorcycle is included. When comparing the two clusters similarities are in place in regard to the focus on spending on holidays, only the object that is utilised to achieve the experiential outcome differs. Whilst some are preferring skiing holidays, or flying to explore different countries, Harley-Davidson consumers use their motorcycle to achieve a similar target.

4.14 Progression Time Table

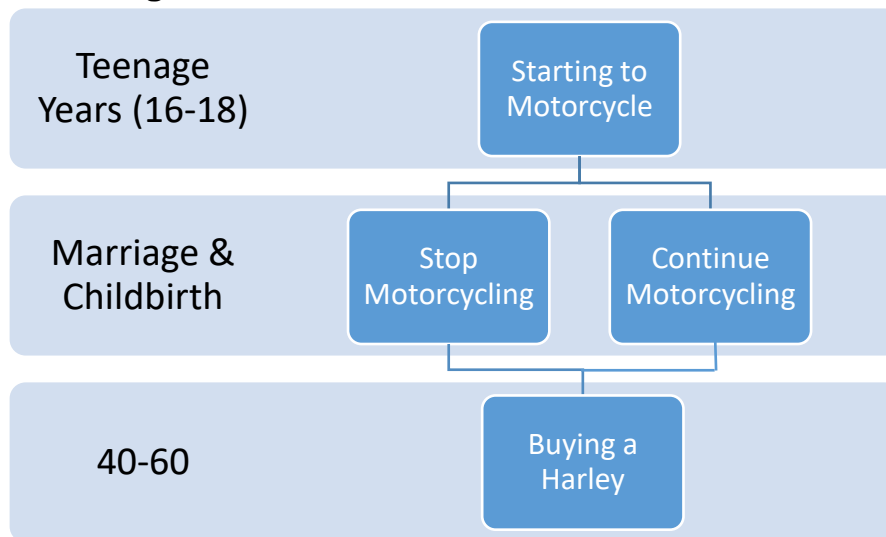


Figure 4.1: Researcher’s own development of Progression Time Table

Chapter Five – Discussion

Chapter Five- Discussion

The aim of this research is to identify the reasoning behind the purchase of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle for middle-aged male consumers, focusing on the geographical location of Edinburgh. In the previous chapter the findings of the research have been revealed based on the detailed individual interviews with Harley-Davidson consumers and Non-Motorcyclists. The current chapter will assist with a detailed discussion of the analysis in combination with the literature review from the early chapters of this thesis to offer a contextual setting and permits a comparison between the primary (collected data) and the secondary (literature review) research.

5.1 Key findings

The following key findings of the study have been identified by the research after the data analysis of the in-depth individual interviews have taken place. Some aspects are based on the secondary research of the literature whilst others are based on emerging issues that came to light from the primary data analysis.

1. Consumption of Harley-Davidson products is not guided through a fear of getting older (mid-life crisis) but rather through an understanding of age by the consumer and appropriate adaptation.
 - Through the interviews, it was established that consumers were not guided through a fear of getting older or attempts to look younger but that their awareness of their age led them to look for a suitable motorcycle that allowed them to continue with their leisure activity.
2. A form of progression occurs through the motorcycle consumption over the years.
 - Current Harley consumers started to motorcycle at a young age and all but one started to motorcycle before they were 40. Throughout that time they owned various makes and types of motorcycle, ultimately leading to the purchase of a Harley in their middle-age in connection to Point 1. Rather than a mid-life crisis purchase, which is often guided through the fear of getting older, it can be seen as an awareness of their age and an adaptation in their desires, instead of going fast it is to enjoy the ride and the scenery, and to accommodate their reduced physical abilities.

3. Harley may not be the first motorbike consumers buy but it may well be the last that they own.

- Harley-Davidson has the stigma of an old-man brand which the public perceives as a mid-life crisis purchase. However, contrary to popular belief this particular consumption is guided through the awareness of age. Harley offers a means to continue to motorcycle at the higher age groups and the American brand provides products that have an appeal to consumers at this particular age range. Once physical ability has reduced due to age, consumers may stop to motorcycle which leaves Harley-Davidson as one of the last motorcycles the consumers buy. Harley motorcycles are products that are purchased more at a later age demonstrating that a Harley may not be the first motorcycle consumers buy but it may well be the last brand motorcyclists will purchase before stopping to ride motorcycles.

4. Harley-Davidson consumers are less risk-seeking (links back to Point 1)

- Harley-Davidson motorcycles are heavier and slower than many motorcycles and Harley riders are seen as the safer motorcyclists on the road. The riders' desire has shifted from going fast to enjoying the ride whilst also being mindful of their own physical abilities. The ride on the Harley-Davidson is not set to break any personal best but instead to enjoy the motorcycling experience more slowly. This ultimately reduces the risk of an accident occurring and impacts on the risk perception of the motorcycle.

5. Acceptance of involved risk that comes with motorcycling

- The involved risks, both monetary and household risks, are accepted by the participants and an indication of this is the possession of a motorcycle license which signals both an understanding of the involved risk of riding a two-wheeled motorcycle and the intention of purchasing a motorcycle. Harley-Davidson consumers are aware of the dangers and try to limit them through more cautious driving.

6. No universal approach to Harley-Davidson's American roots can be established

- Previously it was assumed that the American roots of Harley and the image of cowboy behaviour may have an influence on the consumption of Harley-Davidson an iconic brand of Americana. This was not found to be true. In fact, some consumers actually distance themselves from the American side of Harley and wanted to place a Scottish relationship on the brand. Such as the Davidson family originally being from Scotland before moving to America, which is supported by the findings of Schembri's research (2009) of Harley-Davidson motorcyclists in Australia. However, Harley's iconic status assists with the consumption and in particular, the historical rarity of Harley-Davidson products make them more appealing to current consumers to possess what was difficult obtain when they were younger.

7. A welcoming and supportive subculture that consumers want to continue to be part of (post-purchase)

- Harley-Davidson offers consumers a subculture based around the consumption of their products. Some are directly linked to Harley-Davidson such as the HOG, whereas others are privately organised but with Harley-Davidson at their centre. This can only be experienced in a post purchase environment and prior to the purchase this experience remains a fantasy. Whilst for some, this subculture makes it more attractive for them to follow up on the purchase intentions, it can be said that it is not the predominant reason for consumption. However, through the influence of this subculture and environment which consumers are entering by the purchase of a Harley-Davidson it creates the desire to remain part of it and strengthens the loyalty towards the brand of Harley.

8. Creation of a personal sanctuary in a post-purchase environment

- The literature suggests that the consumer seeks to create a temporary escape from day-to-day life (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Indicators for such creation of a temporary sanctuary have been identified amongst Harley consumers from Edinburgh. The motorcycle is seen as a relief from worries and problems in which the consumer can feel free and does not have to think about current their troubles. It is also seen as a stress buster in which the consumer purposely uses the motorcycle to escape stressful situations and returns feeling less stressed. Again, this can only occur in a post-purchase environment as without a motorcycle this motorcycle specific sanctuary cannot be created.

9. Distancing from outlaw image rather than trying to capture it.

- Harley-Davidson has often been linked to an outlaw environment. This has been strengthened through cinematic interpretations through films and television such as Easy Rider or the recently popular Sons of Anarchy. Current Harley-Davidson consumers distance themselves from these groupings. An awareness of their existence is present, but it is not something that the consumers wish to embed in their personal experience of Harley-Davidson. At organised motorcycle events there is an overlap between the two groups but under friendly circumstances interactions take place. The majority of Harley consumers do not purchase a Harley to be part of the 1%ers but rather distance themselves from these groups when possible.

10. Reduced monetary risks due to a previous motorcycle being sold

- Consumers have previously owned a motorcycle which they sold privately or traded in at the dealership before buying a Harley-Davidson. This reduces the financial and emotional strain of spending money on a hedonic product. This is further reduced if the consumer purchases a used motorcycle which reduces the financial investment further and often only requires a small cash investment in order to complete the purchase. Additionally, the expectations

of the costs of the motorcycle are often higher than they actually were which ultimately assists with the consumption.

11. Customisations allow for individualism within the community (post purchase)

- According to Holt and the dimensions of consumption the aspect of customisation is an integral part of consumption in which the consumer not only classifies themselves through specific customisation but also alters their experience through these changes. Within Harley-Davidson a strong affinity towards customisations can be detected in which the consumer change the motorcycles to suit their personal taste and comfort. Several types of customisations can occur, some may change the comfort, such as with the saddle or the controls, whilst others might focus on the aesthetics for their personal taste. One change that a majority of Harley consumers agree on is the alteration of the exhaust pipe to give the motorcycle its loud noise as the factory fitted exhaust system does not reach the desired noise level. Consumers spend £1833, as a mean value, on customisation and in some cases the consumers pay the same amount as the cost of the motorcycle to finance desired modifications. However, this can only occur in a post-purchase environment as the motorcycle is a requirement in order for customisation to occur. Unlike Holt's example of a baseball fan who is still able to represent and customise his experience without a purchase of a stadium ticket, as he can contribute his knowledge through other means in which he alters the experience.

12. Purchase impacts life outside Harley-Davidson (post purchase)

- In some cases, the purchase of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle showed evidence of impacting on their personal life. This particular element was not previously anticipated by the researcher and was a surprising finding which was only accessed due to the openness of the participants. In one example the purchase has helped one consumer to lower his alcohol consumption significantly because the priorities have shifted from spending time at the local

bar to investing time in riding his Harley-Davidson having a positive impact on the participant's life in several ways. His marriage benefitted from the lower intake of alcohol. His financial situation similarly benefitted from less money being spent at the pub, with the participant suggesting that due to this the Harley paid for itself. Whilst it was not stated it is also fair to assume that due to the lower level of drinking his health has improved.

Furthermore, two participants have stated that they are part of the Widow's Sons who are an international masonic Harley community with a group based in Edinburgh. Both of them claimed that without the purchase of a Harley they would have never thought of becoming a Freemason.

Again, this can only occur as a subsequent result of the purchase and therefore takes place in a post-purchase environment. Additionally, it needs to be noted that these impacts are depending on the consumer's personal life and are not universally applicable. The motorcycle gives the consumer a means to change himself. In some cases, the purchase of a Harley is an addition to the character and identity of the consumer.

13. Consumers indicated that they regret waiting as long as they did before purchasing their first Harley-Davidson

- When asked if they would do anything differently about their Harley experience, Harley consumers indicated that they regret waiting so long before buying a Harley. Factors that can impact this decision to wait can be related to the stigma of the Harley being an old-man brand and the subsequent ridicule they would receive from fellow non-Harley motorcyclists. Even when the purchase is conducted at a later stage in life this playful ridicule is still present. However, it has been often stated by the participants that the friends who mocked them for their purchase also ride Harley-Davidsons now. Ultimately the more mature starting age to Harley-Davidson is supported by the stigma which the non-consumers strengthen.

14. A purchase of a Harley-Davidson is not something non-motorcyclists seek to do based on their lack of experience in comparison to Harley riders who started to motorcycle in their teenage years.

- One question to ask is why the consumption of a motorcycle and more specifically of a Harley does not always occur. Answers can be found from the non-motorcycle cluster, the predominant reason why this consumption does not always occur is based on the involved risks with motorcycling which non-motorcyclists perceive as too high to make it worthwhile. This attitude is present throughout their life which signifies the main difference between Harley consumers and non-motorcyclists. Whilst Harley consumers always had affection towards motorcycling and have been involved in this hedonic consumption since their teenage years, non-motorcyclists did not have an interest in the leisure activity of motorcycling at that age nor do they have it when they reach middle age. Simplified it can be expressed, based on the collected data, the reason why the consumption of motorcycles does not always occur for middle-aged men is that it did not occur during their adolescent years.

5.2 Discussion of Primary and Secondary Data

In order for the discussion of the primary and secondary data to occur appropriately it is beneficial to divide the chapters into the research questions with the primary data responding to it accordingly. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the psychological, social, and cultural factors that elicit hedonic consumption amongst British males between the ages of 40 and 60?
2. How do these factors impact their attitudes towards their personal and household financial risk?
3. What is the process by which each of the key economic, psycho-social, and developmental factors influence the decision?
4. How can this be modelled to explain hedonic consumption within a framework that considers the economic risks involved?

5.3 What are the psychological, social, and cultural factors that elicit hedonic consumption amongst British males between the ages of 40 and 60?

The discussion of psychological, social, and cultural factors when looking at the consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles is essential for the development of an appropriate understanding of consumer behaviour. Through the primary and secondary research, a multitude of involving factors are compared to develop this research's contribution to knowledge. As outlined in the literature review for this segment a division needs to occur between intrinsic and extrinsic influencing factors that are involved in this consumption. Through the intrinsic means, a reason can be established why consumption should occur for motorcyclists whereas the extrinsic factors will indicate reasons why consumption is delayed. The internal reasons are closely related to psychological approaches whereas the external aspects are able to be linked to social and cultural facets.

5.3.1 Psychological Aspects and Influences of Emotions

Emotions are an integral part of motorcycling, some common motorcyclists sayings underline this statement such as “four wheels move the body, two wheels move the soul”. The motorcycle provides a means to a pleasurable end in which a variety of emotions are expressed. These emotions are predominately expressed after the motorcycle ride and are therefore classified as post-purchase development. Although due to the majority of Harley-Davidson consumers having previously owned a motorcycle an assumption occurs based on their previous experiences. Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) outlined the hedonic consumption on an experiential level will influence purchasing behaviour, and argued that the usage of the product itself excited the consumer rather than the purchase, as the usage allows the consumer to experience the product through the “steady flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun” (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p132).

Moglinger et al. (2012) and Alba and Williams (2013) both agreed that emotions can be expressed in various ways such as excitement or calm. This reflection on the experience of motorcycling can be observed through the participants' descriptions of their emotions after the use of their Harley-Davidson, which often related to the emotions of happiness and relief. Whilst consumption may generate emotions of

happiness or pleasure, the emotions of fulfilment can only occur retrospectively in a post-consumption environment (Csikszentmihalyi, 2008; Seligman, 2011; Alba & Williams, 2013).

5.3.1.1 Material Goods over Experiential Consumption

Motorcycling represent a unique approach to consumption. Previous research argued that long-lasting material goods are preferred over experiential consumption such as holidays or restaurant visits when people feel more financially constrained (Tully et al., 2015). However, motorcycling represents both a long-lasting material good with the experiential consumption of the usage of the motorcycle. This is not exclusive to Harley-Davidson but includes all motorcycles. A motorcycle offers its consumers the possibility to obtain a long-lasting material good with which experiential aspects can be achieved. Two aspects need to be mentioned from the collected data of this study as they both come into play when discussing hedonic consumption in this regard. These two parts are the mean annual income of the participants of the study and the spending behaviour of non-motorcyclists. The first aspect will introduce that consumption of Harley-Davidson is not reduced based on annual income. The mean annual income for the Harley-Davidson cluster was just over £35,000. In some cases, the purchase costs of the motorcycle exceeded the annual income. This illustrates that even if the income is not high enough to justify such frivolous spending behaviour consumption of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle is not affected or reduced. This argument supports Tully et al.'s approach (2015) in frivolous consumption still occurs under financial constraint. Additionally, Harley represents both a durable good and its usage allows the consumer to indulge in experiential consumption simultaneously. It necessarily follows that the desire to purchase a Harley is further disconnected from the annual income and occurs despite financial constraints.

The other aspect that needs to be considered is the approach that non-motorcyclists take and on what they are spending their money for purely enjoyable reasons. The predominant feedback that has been received was that non-motorcyclists spend the majority of the money on holidays for hedonic consumption purposes. This again can be compared to Harley-Davidson consumers as the motorcycle can also represent a means to travel. The difference here is that the non-motorcycle consumers spend their money several times on holidays whereas a Harley-Davidson consumer buy a motorcycle once but use it several times to travel. Often the motorcycle is at the centre

of holiday selection and consumers look where they can go and tie the motorcycle into it. However, this can only occur in the retrospective of the purchase as the motorcycle ownership would be the essential aspect of the experiential consumption.

5.3.1.2 Strong Brand Image

Prior to the purchase, an emotional influence that is guiding consumption can also be seen in the strength of the brand of Harley-Davidson. Esch et al. (2012) have compared Harley-Davidson to other strong brands such as Coca-Cola, Porsche, or Ferrari. It is the iconic image that allows consumers to make associations with a brand by just hearing the name or “when consumer use declarative knowledge, they access attributes, facts and knowledge about the target stimulus. When they access experiential information, they attend to their personal feelings and experiences” (Schwarz & Clore, 1996; Schwarz, 2004; Esch et al., 2012, p76). This experiential information appears to have a large impact on the consumer's decision-making process. Often this is related back to previous experiences current Harley-Davidson consumers had with the brand, often relating back to their youth, thus strengthening the emotional influences. Reflection support this such as Participant 15 of the Harley-Davidson cluster *“I mean when I was younger nobody could get a Harley, they were so hard to get.”* The rarity of the Harley-Davidson presence has changed in comparison to today. Harley-Davidson motorcycles are easier to obtain but the connection to its rarity from the past strengthens the desire to purchase a Harley for the more mature consumers. The previous experience as it can be seen in the reflection of Participant 15 from the past is influencing his decision making today.

Motorcycling, in general, appears to be an emotional leisure activity in which the consumer experiences emotional influences prior, during, and after the purchase and consumption. Harley-Davidson falls under the same category with the extensions of its iconic brand image that allows the consumer to generate an emotional connection to the brand from previous experiences with the brand which in some cases can look back on the consumer's youth. Harley's perception is guided through this image and consumers wish to be part of it based on its historic appeal to be the owner of what used to be a rare motorcycle and is perceived as the pinnacle of motorcycles as it has been described by participant 6 of the non-motorcycle cluster Harley-Davidson is creating an association for motorcyclists and non-motorcyclists in which all can create some sort of connection to the brand.

5.3.1.3 Anticipation

As discussed, anticipation will intensify the consumption of the motorcycle and the post-consumption reflection (Loewenstein, 1987; Lovallo & Kahneman, 2000; Van Boven & Ashworth, 2007; Alba & Williams, 2013). It was assumed by the researcher that the break in riding motorcyclists have to endure during the winter months will intensify the consumption. However, motorcyclists appear to have a passive approach during these months in which they alter or customise the motorcycle and then use the summer months to ride it. The type of consumption is changed. In some cases, the motorcycle is also used during the winter months. This, however, does not take away from their enjoyment of the active consumption of the motorcycle during the summer.

5.3.2 Social and Consumption as Integration

Throughout the research, it was outlined several times that an important part of Harley-Davidson consumption is the social and subcultural aspect of the American motorcycle manufacturer. Harley-Davidson is a unique brand in terms of its social aspect. A company with a similar social aspect is difficult to find and even if it can be found it will be a challenge to establish a comparison. Whilst other leisure activities have a generic community of participants, Harley-Davidson's approach is brand specific and its consumers cherish the social aspect.

Previous research often focused on motorcycle groups with an ethnographic approach. However, within that community a general consensus is present, and participants will contribute to the overall image and mentality of the group. In the case of Schembri (2009) participated in the HOG group within Australia which may be an obvious starting point, but it does not reflect the majority of Harley consumers.

This research gathered its data directly through the local Harley-Davidson dealership instead of the HOG groups that can be found within Scotland. This allowed for a greater cross-section of consumers. Harley-Davidson has obtained a unique approach when it comes to its social aspect. The aforementioned HOG group is one side, but a lot socialising also occurs at the dealership itself which are fitted with cafés and seating. During the summer months consumers meet up at the dealership, not to purchase a new motorcycle or Harley merchandise, but just to communicate with other members of the community from different places. Club affiliation is irrelevant to

them. Additionally, it was established, through the interviews with the Harley-Davidson consumers, that often the consumers are not part of the HOG group and in some cases even have a dislike towards the organisation of the group which as seen in the example of Participant 5 of the Harley-Davidson cluster. This frequent occurrence creates the impression that the research of Schembri (2009) would have benefitted from communicating with HOG community outsiders.

However, Holt's four dimensions of consumption (1995) outline that the object of consumption is used as a form of integration. This aspect of integration outlines that the consumer is reorienting "their self-concept so that it aligns with an institutional defined identity" (Solomon, 1983; Zerubavel, 1991; Holt, 1995, p6). Through this approach, the consumer would seek out to adapt to the Harley environment in order to experience the freedom and mystique described by Schouten & McAlexander (1995, p85) as the consumer would "partake symbolically in an outlaw mystique without ever venturing into the realm of the outlaw biker." Although evidence for outlaw culture appreciation appears to be lacking as current Harley-Davidson consumers oppose the outlaw culture and known violent motorcycle groupings. What Schouten and McAlexander did not consider was that the outlaw perspective has a negative connotation amongst non-violent motorcycle groups. The mystique that they are trying to support comes from the brand of Harley-Davidson and the creation of a temporary sanctuary in which they do not need to worry about day-to-day struggles but instead just feel free. Instead, Holt and Thompson's approach of the man-of-action hero (2004) appears to be more fitting to Harley consumers which will be discussed in more detail in the cultural discussion.

5.3.2.1 Peer Pressures to not buy a Harley-Davidson

Integration and social adaption to the environment may be a reason to remain or to intensify one's desire to be part of the group, but it does not illustrate a direct reason for the consumption to occur. After listening to the participant's stories, it came to light that the influence of peer pressure is often different in regard to Harley than previously assumed. The current consumer was mocked and ridiculed for his purchase of a Harley-Davidson and the image that Harley-Davidson is delaying the consumption rather than supporting it. Social influences, in this case, can slow down consumption intentions rather than accelerate them. However, this changes over time and the

friends begin to move to Harley-Davidson as well. As established in the data analysis segment (see 4.3.2 Hate to Love) Participants 11.

5.3.2.2 Real bikers and Poseurs

Whilst the consumer seeks to integrate into the Harley-Davidson community the notion of real bikers and poseurs was touched upon in the literature and may have an impact on consumption. In a post-purchase environment, the consumer might feel pressured into specific Harley related consumption aspects, from customisations to the purchase of a new bike. Secondary research suggested that the consumer would mostly be judged on their experience and their knowledge of the subculture through two approaches (1) the number of years of active participation within the subculture and/or through (2) the commitment to the subculture through their regular participation as measured by the number of motorcycles owned or miles ridden on the motorcycle (Celsi et al., 1993; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). Previously it was assumed that this would be very focused on Harley-Davidson, however, to understand this aspect in more detail the consumer's motorcycle history stands out as the main factor for their integration and understanding. This means that the consumer not only requires an understanding of Harley-Davidson community but expresses his overall knowledge of the motorcycle community. This is related to the various motorcycles that the consumer has owned over the duration of his motorcycling career.

This results in the argument that real biker integration occurs on several levels, both in the active participation as a Harley-Davidson consumer and the overall experience within motorcycling and the history of motorcycle ownership. The participants of this study often discussed in detail their previous motorcycles and their experiences with them. This correlates to Holt's four dimensions of consumption (1995), consumption as integration and more specifically the subsection of "assimilation" allowing the consumer to advance from novice to expert within the field by demonstrating their extensive knowledge of the area.

Even with this approach there is no discrimination towards new owners within the Harley-Davidson community, which offers a welcoming community after the purchase of a Harley. The statement of Karen Herzog (1993) that "a welder can sit down with a bank president and speak the same language" has been found to be true and supported by participants' stories.

Socialising an integral part of Harley-Davidson and may mean the consumers want to continue to participate in this subculture. However, this occurs retrospectively and often the previous social group of the consumer has attempted to influence the consumer against the acquisition prior to the purchase.

5.3.3 Cultural

Cultural influences can be closely linked to social aspects as well. The surrounding culture is embodied by the consumer as part of their identity (Belk, 1988; Levy, 1959; Alba & Williams, 2013). This can be from the overall culture but also on a smaller scale within a subculture in which the community's mentality may influence the consumer and their consumption. Schouten and McAlexander (1995) argued that consumption is influenced by the community in order to obtain a certain standing within the subculture. This can be closely related to Holt's integration dimension in which the communities approach is adapted and replicated by the consumer so as to be perceived as a strong member of the subculture. However, as outlined in Chapter 1.2.4.3, this takes places in a post-purchase environment as the subculture would not have the described impact on a potential consumer as he would not be part of the community at that stage.

Other cultural influences can impact the consumer's decision-making process. Imagination based on media influences can be stronger than anticipated and influence the consumption of Harley-Davidson products.

5.3.3.1 Men-of-Action Hero

Holt and Thompson's approach (2004) establishes that the culture creates a desire in which the consumer wants to reach a more enhanced masculine status. This is not to replicate an image such as particular strong masculine characters but rather establish a representation of this image. This can be related to appearances of wealth and social standing and also risk-seeking nature. Media representation strengthens this approach further in which male consumers are often motivated to consume certain products in order to capture the often-presented image of freedom and deliberation. Harley-Davidson consumers often used the cinematic influence of *Easy Rider* as an example, as it has been previously assumed, to outline the image that they would like to establish. The film does not establish an image of a wealthy motorcyclist but rather

someone who is free and can go wherever he would like to whenever he desires. The addition of a modern-day cowboy image supports these feelings further. The replication of this image is not based on wealth but rather outlines the deliberation for them of day-to-day struggles and to be worry-free. This research supports the approach that Holt and Thompson have introduced in which the consumer seeks to “experience a sense of liberation and personal autonomy from constraints of polite society” (2004, p426). Attempts at this can be identified through the language used amongst Harley-Davidson consumers. Whilst the term freedom or free is not being used, they utilise the description of stress-buster or stress relief.

5.3.3.2 American Culture

Harley-Davidson is a company strongly related to the American culture and the company uses terminology and imagery that can be related back to American culture. This can be seen in various ways such as the frequently use of the bald eagle with the Bar and Shield Emblem of the Company as seen in the image 5.1 or description of their motorcycles as Freedom bikes. In addition to the American symbolism, it is also necessary to take into consideration other aspects of the American



Image 5.1: Harley-Davidson logo “An American Legend” (Pngkey, 2019)

culture such as cowboys which are often related to Harley-Davidson consumers as they describe their motorcycles as “steel horses”. Also, the manner in which Harley consumers choose to dress such as leather boots and jeans strengthens the cowboy feeling in connection to masculine behaviour.

Therefore, it became appropriate to look at the American side of Harley-Davidson and how Scottish motorcyclists perceive themselves in relation to it. Through the previous research of Schembri (2009), it has been identified that amongst Australian Harley-Davidson consumers there appears to be a dislike of the American roots of the company. For example, some participants in the study of Schembri (2009) altered the American symbols to Australian symbols often changing the flags and customising the experience so that it becomes suitable to the riders nationality and culture. A customisation that would go hand in hand with Holds’ dimension of Integration. It reflects not upon “why” the consumer participates in the subculture but rather on “how” this participation occurs (Holt, 1995).

Within this study, the perception of Harley-Davidson's roots have been perceived as either neutral or in some cases as negative, also related back to the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States. However, a frequent occurrence was the establishment of a connection between Scotland the brand of Harley-Davidson as the ancestors of Walter and Arthur Davidson originated from Scotland before leaving for the United States. It, therefore, allows for a comparison with the research of Schembri (2009) in which the perception is adapted to the cultural identity. This case, however, is based on facts rather than a direct customisation.

It can be said that American culture is not an influence on the consumption and in some cases offers a negative perception of the brand for Harley-Davidson consumers. In a variety of cases a similar approach, as introduced by Schembri (2009), to the "American Legend" (as seen in the image above) when looking at different geographical locations outside of the US. The consumer often adapts the symbolism of the consumer cultural identity. Cowboy symbolism also does not appear to have an effect on the purchase intentions of the motorcycle and does not appear as a motivational factor for purchase.

5.3.4 Related to collected Data

After discussing the secondary data with some contribution of the primary data it is now important to further explore the collected interview data.

5.3.4.1 Psychological factors

5.3.4.1.1 Material good

The first subsection of this element has been the decision to consume material goods over experiential consumption. In order to find support for this argument, one would need to primarily look at the object of consumption and a motorcycle offers the consumer both aspects. First, it represents a material object that is purchased, second, this material object is primarily used for experiential consumption purposes. It, therefore, offers a causality between the two cases as without the motorcycle the experiential consumption would not occur. A motorcycle is an object that is predominantly consumed for hedonic purposes, excluding work-related motorcycle consumption for commutes or work activities such as motorcycle police. So, it is a material good purchased for future experiential consumption.

5.3.4.1.2 Strong Band

The aspect of the strong brand image is often related back to its consumption reasons. A well-known brand such as Harley-Davidson offers not just the object in itself but also the appeal of the brand of which the consumers own a part. The icon that the brand represents has often been mentioned by participants as seen in the data analysis chapter 4.2.2. This appeal supports the purchase intentions further and adds to the motivation of the consumption.

5.3.4.1.3 Anticipation and Consumption

Within the segment of anticipation to consumption, it was argued that the longer the wait for consumption the higher the anticipation and excitement, within certain ranges. The researcher has introduced that amongst Harley-Davidson consumers this varies as the kind of consumption occurring depends on the time of the year, with an active consumption during the summer and a passive consumption approach during winter months. The work that Harley-Davidson consumers carry out can often be extensive as it can be seen in the example of Participant 1 of the Harley-Davidson cluster. The work that he is referring to would usually be carried out during the winter months when the weather limits consumption and the consumer has more time available to work on the motorcycle. Even though it is not an active consumption of the vehicle in the usual sense it can still be seen as a form of consumption as contact time between the object of consumption and the consumer is still present.

5.3.4.2 Social Factors

Within the social aspects of Harley various approaches have been identified that could influence the consumption of Harley-Davidson consumers.

5.2.4.2.1 Reverse Peer Pressure

The potential future consumers often experience some peer pressures to not purchase a Harley-Davidson because other motorcyclists either see the old-man image or a Harley-Davidson motorcycle is regarded as an inferior motorcycle from either the technological or the weight perspective. Examples of this pressure amongst friends can be seen in the following examples as outlined in the data analysis.

This may hinder the consumption to an extent as it may not occur as quickly as the consumer would like, due to reflection by the potential consumer about his purchase intentions and if it is the correct way to proceed. However, once the purchase is

completed he enhances his social group and wishes to remain a part of this consumption related culture. Often friends that argued against a purchase of a Harley previously join Harley Davidson as well.

This suggests that consumption is related to a change of desires and taste that is so dominant that people who have argued against it change their mind and buy a Harley-Davidson. One example for this particular approach can be found in participant 18 who due to a medical condition did not have many options and Harley-Davidson allowed him to continue to motorcycle. However, his appreciation grew over time from dislike to a love and appreciation for Harley as outlined in chapter 4.3.2. This change in taste allows the consumption to occur.

5.2.4.2.2 Real Bikers and Poseurs

In previous segments of the secondary data, the term real bikers was mentioned several times. This can often be related back to the difference between outlaw motorcycle groups and general consumers who are not associated with them. Harley consumers see themselves as bikers despite distancing themselves from outlaw associations. The modern day Harley-Davidson consumer buys his first Harley at a later stage of his life and just wants to enjoy the consumption of it, this allows for a general consensus to be created amongst Harley consumers that the ownership of a Harley is the predominant reason to be accepted within this subculture. This acceptance is not based on any group connections but rather the consumer is represented through the motorcycle. With this the former “real bikers” are pushed away from Harley-Davidson as one participant 8 of the Harley-Davidson cluster established. This approach indicates that there are no poseurs, using the known motorcycle language, amongst Harley-Davidson consumers but rather all active participants are seen as real bikers.

5.2.4.3 Cultural Factors

Through the literature, it was established that consumption can also occur through the creation of a personal sanctuary to which the consumer can retreat to, in order to temporarily escape the pressures of life. This can be through various means, as established in Chapters 1.2.4.3 and 5.2.1.3. An indication of the use of a Harley-Davidson for this purpose appears to be in place for Harley-Davidson consumers. The motorcycle is seen as a way to escape issues or problems which relieves the consumer from stress and improves his mood. This research supports the arguments

of Holt & Thompson (2004) and Schouten & McAlexander (1995) in which the consumer seeks liberation and personal autonomy.

However, it cannot be said with that this is specifically related to Harley-Davidson more than any other motorcycle riding. This would be an aspect that future research would need to discover to create more understanding of the motorcyclist's mentality.

5.2.4.3.2 American Roots

Harley-Davidson, as outlined at various stages, symbolises an American icon. The company does not shy away from using stereotypical images and references to its American background (see Chapter 5.2.1.3.2). However, Harley consumers from Edinburgh appear to be critical of this perception and attempt to place a twist on the company's identity that is more suitable to their personal identity. Participant 10 outlines the Scottish roots of Harley-Davidson. Similarly, it can be observed from participant 11 who identifies the company's Scottish heritage with both founders' families originated from Scotland. Even though the information provided by participants 11 is only partially true as both men were born in the United States and the Davidson family originated from Brechin in Scotland and the Harley family lived in Cambridgeshire before leaving for the US. Others outline that the current political changes are impacting that association with America. Some state that Harley-Davidson's background is just coincidental but did not impact their decision-making process as outlined in participant 18's response, that the motorbike is coincidentally American but it did not attribute to his purchase intention. In a similar manner, Participant 22 explained his consumption.

However, overall there appears to be an appreciation for the American image that it represents, and a variety of consumers have ridden a Harley in America or are still see it as something that they would like to do.

It appears that Harley's background is varying in importance from consumer to consumer. Some may see it as influential and something to aspire for whilst others obtain a more critical position. Some examples (participants 10 & 11) appear to give evidence of a similar approach as was outlined by Schembri (2009) by altering the background of the company to make it more suitable to their own identity.

5.2.1.5 Review of discussion

Motorcycling, in general, creates a variety of emotions which can vary from excitement, happiness, satisfaction, or freedom from stress in which the usage of the object of consumption creates the emotions rather than the purchase in itself. Harley consumers indicate this approach. Additionally, it has been argued through previous literature that material goods are often preferred to experiential consumption. However, in this particular case the motorcycle of Harley-Davidson represents both a material object that is utilised for experiential consumption purposes.

Emotions can also be created through the brand image in which Harley-Davidson benefits from its recognisability allowing both consumers and non-consumers to establish a connection to the brand even if that connection only relates to a brief moment of seeing a Harley-Davidson on the road. Harley is additionally benefitting from its brand image in regard to purchase behaviour in which motorcyclists have the desire to purchase a Harley when they get older which is often related back to the consumer's perception of the brand.

The secondary research outlined that the anticipation of consumption adds to its satisfaction which can be partially seen within the world of motorcyclists. This aspect comes to light when looking at figures for motorcycle usage throughout the year in which the summer months indicate a higher usage than the winter months. However, consumption can also be other contact time with the motorcycle Such as when the Harley-Davidson consumers often work on their motorcycle during winter time. This work can include but is not limited to, maintenance work or customisations.

From a social perspective two parts come into play which are linked to the status of the purchase. The first status is present prior to the purchase in which the consumer's fellow motorcyclists often mock the potential Harley consumer for expressing the desire to buy a Harley-Davidson. This may have the impact that the consumption occurs at a later stage due to the negative peer pressure. In this case, peer pressure is often not motivating consumption but is a hindrance to it.

The second status is present in a post-purchase environment in which the consumer finds himself in a new subculture. During this time the motorcyclist's experience becomes important as he is attempting to become an integrated member of the said

subculture. The consumer's previous motorcycle history comes into play as he attempts to express his expertise through the variety of motorcycles he has previously owned whilst also generating more knowledge of the new environment through an active participation.

Culturally, a variety of forces are in play that impact consumer behaviour, the subcultural environment in connection to the brand of Harley-Davidson and the overarching national culture of the consumer. Harley-Davidson represents a brand of masculine nature that is often related to its American roots. The consumer is expressing a manner of deliberation from day-to-day struggles through the usage of the object of consumption. The imagery of Easy Rider and the expressed worry-free lifestyle is something that Harley-Davidson consumers try to capture for themselves through the usage of the motorcycle and participation within the subculture of Harley. This particular film was mentioned several times when they attempted to explain Harley-Davidson.

Harley-Davidson's American roots have originally been seen as influential to the consumption. However, current Harley-Davidson consumers expressed their doubt about how influential that aspect has been for themselves. In some cases, consumers denied the American cultural influences on their consumption and attempted to reshape Harley's roots to make it more suitable for their personal perception.

5.4 How do these factors impact their attitudes towards their personal and household financial risk?

As stated, perception of risk and safety are important for the consumption of motorcycles in general and also specifically to Harley-Davidson. This is based on two approaches and manners of perceiving risks. The first perspective is the one from current Harley-Davidson consumers who regard their present motorcycle consumption as a safer approach to motorcycling compared to their previous consumption attitude. The term attitude is of high importance as the consumer expressed a change of attitude and their willingness to accept risk seeking leisure activities without wanting to terminate their overall consumption. Whilst others perceive them as risk-seeking they regard themselves and their consumption as a less risk-taking approach. This means that Harley consumers perceive their consumption as safer. The other perspective is the risk perception of outsiders in this

case non-motorcyclists. Non-motorcyclists state as the predominant reason for not participating in motorcycling was that the risks involved are too high.

This results in an unclear perception of the leisure activity of motorcycling as Harley consumers argue that their consumption is from a standpoint that they are more secure on a Harley-Davidson, whereas non-motorcyclists see motorcycling as too risk-taking which hinders them from participating.

5.4.1 Risk and Safety Perception

So, there appears to be dissonance between the risk perception of non-motorcyclists and Harley consumers. One side argues that motorcycling is too dangerous and they would not willingly expose themselves to these risks whereas the other side describes their consumption as sensible and as less risk-seeking than other types of motorcycles. The approach that Harley consumers developed corresponds to the theory developed by Weber et al. (2002) in which risk takers do not indicate a stronger preference for risk but rather create an overly optimistic perception of risk itself (Cooper et al., 1988; Weber et al., 2002). A personal understanding is created of being able to control the risks at hand through skill and handling of information (March and Shapira, 1987; Weber et al., 2002) (see Chapter 1.3.2). Through the perception of controllability and manageability, whether realistic or illusory, risk is being impacted in a manner that makes it appear less precarious and therefore more sensible for the decision maker to take. As outlined previously, situational risk perception impacts the decision maker by either creating a more risk-seeking or more risk-averse attitude (Schwartz & Hasnain, 2001).

This can be related back to two aspects, firstly, the nature of the type of motorcycle the consumer is riding can impact the willingness to accept risks and secondly, the level of control the consumer has on the outcome of the experience. Harley consumers have purchased a motorcycle that is not designed for speed or specific off-track abilities. This results in a less risk-taking manner of driving by the consumer as it more about enjoying the ride than attempting to break personal bests in regard to time or speed. A significant quote from participant 4 of the Harley-Davidson cluster outlines this particular aspect in chapter 4.4.

The aforementioned aspect of controllability is also an important aspect to include as motorcyclists indicate a strong preference towards controllability of the outcome as

they are literally in the driving seat. It is down to the consumer to determine which risks he will take on the road and which he will not.

Whilst the risks undeniably exist it is the consumer's decision to accept them. An indication for this acceptance is the possession of a motorcycle license, a decision that often has been made in the teenage years. The potential consumer shows not only interest in motorcycling but also accepts that a purchase of a motorcycle will be made at one point and accepting the risks. The decision to motorcycle at the teenage stage gives access to the environment of motorcycling at a later stage in life.

A non-motorcyclist would have the hurdle of obtaining a license prior to the purchase of a motorcycle. This eliminates a rushed decision-making process in which they could go to a dealership or a private seller and just buy a motorcycle. In their youth, the non-motorcycle cluster did not make the decision to motorcycle and invest the time and money in obtaining a motorcycle license. It can be argued that obtaining a license in the first place may be the larger step between the purchase of a motorcycle and the license aspect. Neither the acceptance of risks nor the interest in the leisure activity of actively motorcycling prevent the purchase.

This forms the argument that Harley consumers follow a timeline of consumption that influences their decision-making process at a later stage in life.

5.4.2 Affect heuristic

The perception of risk is closely linked to affection towards a product, which will appear at first sight and mostly subconsciously (Zajonc, 1980; Slovic et al., 2002; Slovic et al., 2007). This approach also has a direct influence on the perception of the involved risks within a hedonic consumption such as motorcycling or in this case Harley-Davidson. Previously, it has been argued that if an object of consumption has been liked then the involved risks are seen as low and the benefits as high and contrary if an object of consumption is not liked then the involved risks are seen as high and the benefits as low (Alhakami & Slovic, 1994) (see Chapter 1.3.2.2). This has a direct impact on the perception of motorcycling by Harley-Davidson consumers and non-motorcyclists and support the previous assumption that the benefits of a Harley-Davidson is high and ultimately the risk must be low, as stated by the findings of Finucane et al. (2000), whilst non-motorcyclists are deterred from the involved risks of the leisure activity of motorcycling it is not possible for them to see the benefits of motorcycling.

5.4.3 Reduced Risks

As established in the data analysis (Chapter Five), the involved financial risks of a purchase of a Harley-Davidson are also further reduced due to the consumer selling their previous motorcycle either privately or trading it in at the motorcycle dealership. This reduces the financial and also emotional strain on the consumer as he is only required to *“put a little on top”* as mentioned by Participant 24 of the Harley-Davidson cluster. This reduced risk is further strengthened by the accident rates indicated of cruiser motorcycles in comparison to sports motorcycles, as shown in Chapter 1.3.2.1, in which the chances of death on a cruiser motorcycle is halved thus creating and supporting the perception that Harley consumers see their current consumption as a more secure consumption.

Based on these arguments the involved risks within motorcycling in connection to the affect heuristics close to eliminating the involvement of them for the purchase behaviour. Non-motorcyclists predominantly regard motorcycling as too dangerous in regard to the risk of life but have not mentioned the potential monetary risks. Harley consumers have previously owned fast motorcycles in which they were far more exposed to the dangers of death but have now selected to reduce that risk by purchasing a slower motorcycle that allows them to continue with their hobby with a reduction of risks.

5.4.4 Related to collected Data

This chapter of the discussion focuses predominantly on the different perceptions of the involved risks and therefore has used a variety of contributions from the primary data already. However, it is also important to recapture the discussion as a whole in order to highlight the risk perception of Harley consumers and how motorcycle consumption is regarded by outsiders.

Harley-Davidson consumers see their consumption as less risk-seeking often based on the type of motorcycle they are purchasing. This can often be related back to previously introduced aspects (such as Chapter 4.3.1) as comfort or speed become more and less important respectively. The advancing age of the consumers and their reason not to ride Sports bikes and rather decide to purchase a Harley can be found in the examples in chapter 4.4.

Often the consumer does not describe why he has bought a Harley but instead explains his reasoning for his purchase through a process of elimination in which he

outlines why he would not buy another type of motorcycle. Additionally, in the rare instances why the consumer goes into detail (as seen in the example of Participant 15), the purchase is justified through Harley's heightened safety aspects such as speed and noise.

Harley consumers are aware of the involved risks and know that motorcycling represent a risky leisure activity but do not appear to be concerned about them as they adapt to the situations accordingly:

The awareness of the danger reduces its impact on the consumer. Various means of reducing the involved risks are in place for the motorcyclists. Non-motorcyclists do not have the experience in comparison and therefore are not able to give a fair reflection on the actual risks nor would they be able to make a direct comparison between various types of motorcycles.

Non-motorcyclists state that the physical risks of motorcycling are too high for them and did not reflect on the financial risks that come along with purchasing a motorcycle. Similarly, for the Harley consumers, the financial risks are also not at the forefront of the involved risks. The cost of the motorcycle is accepted as part of the leisure activity. As established at various stages of the research, the influence of the financial risks is also limited as the consumers accept them and often reduced due to the consumer selling a previous motorcycle or motorcycles to finance the purchase of a new motorbike.

5.5 What is the process by which each of the key economic, psycho-social, and developmental factors influence the decision?

This segment looks at three further aspects that can influence consumption, economic, psycho-social, and developmental. As seen in the previous research of the secondary data, a consumer's economic decision-making for future benefits is often flawed and does not represent an appropriate evaluation of the consumption. (Tully et al., 2015). Therefore, it is worthwhile exploring this further in the combination of the primary and secondary data.

Psycho-social contributions are present within this particular consumption which impacts on the consumer's decision making. These factors are often related to the worthiness of the investment and to its potential satisfaction expressed through enjoyment. Hedonic consumption of Harley-Davidson products exceeds the previous argument of purchases of luxury bread or beauty products based on purchasing costs.

Through developmental aspects, further motivation for consumption can be identified. Previously, it was argued that feelings of nostalgia are in place for the consumption of Harley-Davidson products, which is partially supported. However, the predominant developmental contributor can be observed through a progression of consumption which guides the motorcyclist through various stages of his motorcycling career and leads to the motivation to purchase a Harley-Davidson motorcycle in his middle-aged years. Additionally, other developmental forces can impact on the consumption, such as when masculinity might be seen as endangered causing male consumers to follow a more irrational approach to consumption.

5.5.1 Economic

As outlined in the previous section 2.4.2, an argument for an intra-personal discussion occurred with two forces working against each other that can influence consumers' decision-making processes (Dhar & Simonson, 1999; Khan & Dhar, 2006; Kivetz & Simonson, 2002a; O'Curry & Strahilevitz, 2001; Okada, 2005; Sela et al., 2009; Kivetz & Zheng, 2017). There is an intra-personal debate on consuming hedonic products, on the one side is the urge for indulgence and on the other the argument to be prudent and in a more stable financial position if required in the future (Kivetz & Zheng, 2017). Harley consumers indicate no financial stress at the time of the purchase but rather outlined that if times should become difficult that they still have the opportunity to acquire money through the sale of their motorcycle. Therefore, the perceived financial risks are also reduced in regard to future struggles. It appears that this would be the answer to the intra-personal debate on indulgence and prudence.

This chapter will take into consideration the primary and secondary data to explain the justification that Harley-Davidson consumers use for their frivolous hedonic consumption with a potential disregard for future necessities. Harley consumers indicate no financial stress at the time of the purchase but rather outlined that if times should become difficult that they still have the opportunity to acquire money through the sale of their motorcycle. Therefore, the perceived financial risks are also reduced

in regard to future struggles. This appears to be their answer to the intra-personal debate between indulgence and prudence.

The purchase of a Harley-Davidson can be described as old luxury under which other categories such as diamonds, fur and expensive cars fall (Hagtvedt & Patrick, 2009), in contrast to new luxury that is expressed through smaller premium items. A form which may be more applicable to the older generation that is building Harley-Davidson's customer base, through the higher age the consumer may be more tempted to purchase items that he perceives as the right form of luxury. The difference between the outlined old and new luxury is that old luxury are items that have a resale value and in the case of financial struggles the monetary investment can be returned even if it is partially. The outlined examples of new luxury in section 1.4.2; bath salts make-up, and even sandwiches are perishable goods that will be used up and do not hold a resale value in comparison. Strengthening the position of Harley consumers purchase and introducing a form of reasoning to their hedonic consumption.

5.5.1.1 Economic Decision making in a Social Environment

As established, Harley-Davidson offers not just a product that consumers wish to buy but also includes a subculture in which the consumption of the product takes place. It, therefore, becomes important to look at spending behaviour for social purposes. Based on the fear of social rejection consumption can be increased and changed accordingly (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Lee & Shrum, 2012; Ward & Dahl, 2014). Whilst not all consumers are faced with this dilemma it can still influence some to enhance their consumption.

An important indicator has been that the majority of participants in the research indicated that they changed the motorcycle to adapt to the community's identity, mainly through the change of the exhaust system to give their Harley-Davidson the known noise. It may not be damaged self-esteem which motivates consumers towards these alterations of their motorcycle, but it might be more related to the feeling of pride that the consumer would experience by having these customisations done to feel more part of the community. The approach taken by McFerran seems to be applicable in this context in which the consumers feeling of pride is closely linked to the brand in itself (McFerran et al., 2014). This form of personal spending is motivated by the community's perception of what is good and what is bad.

Gao et al. (2016) outline that consumption is motivated by status symbols in detailing that power distance belief (PDB) consumption occurs in relation to other people's status. Harley consumers gather pride in their consumption where the impact that their consumption is seen as part of consumption for status purposes. However, it needs to be argued that it is more of a self-pride that is disconnected from others. For Harley consumers, the purchase of a Harley is the fulfilment of a dream that they did not think would come true. It is also being able to own a part of Harley-Davidson and to consume the motorcycle whenever the consumer wishes.

5.5.1.2 Reward spending behaviour

In Section 1.4.3.1 reward spending behaviour was discussed which may have an impact on the consumption of Harley-Davidson products. Through the discussions with the Harley-Davidson consumers, it appeared that only one participant signified this particular approach. His intention was originally to purchase a Harley after reaching his weight loss target or at the time when he reached a certain age depending which comes first. However, he deviated from his original spending behaviour plan based on a reward approach due to the impact of him receiving a substantial financial gain by finding money at his home. The reward approach identified by Kivetz and Zheng (2017) does not appear to be applicable to Harley-Davidson consumers. The researcher asked if the consumer was going through a special or an extraordinary time at the time of the purchase, which could include childbirth or other joyful experiences that may trigger the desire to purchase a Harley. It appeared that Harley consumers did not obtain a Harley-Davidson based on joyful experiences.

5.5.2 Psycho-Social Factors

Motorcycling and Harley consumption represent a unique facet of consumer behaviour in regard to psycho-social approaches. These psycho-social elements can often be related back to elements that have been introduced at earlier stages of the literature review and the discussion. As outlined previously men can be observed taking flight from commitment and utilising "commodities to act out their emancipatory fantasies" (Ehrenreich, 1983; Holt & Thompson, 2004, p425). Equally, other elements can influence consumption such as spending money on oneself as a reward.

5.5.2.1 Threatened Masculinity

Similar to the Men-of-Action hero approach designed by Holt and Thompson (2004), social pressures may impact on the consumer's decision-making process in a manner

that the consumer wishes to relieve the pressure from. The threatened masculine position may have an impact on consumption towards masculine objects. This type of consumption can vary from man to man as each has their own relief system in place. Some may approach it from an active perspective such as white water rafting (Arnould & Price, 1993), race car driving (Holt & Thompson, 2004), mountain climbing (Deighton, 1992), or skydiving (Celsi et al., 1993) whereas others may indicate it through frivolous purchases. The threatened masculinity forces an escape from reality to a temporary relief in which the worries of the day are forgotten. Whilst Harley-Davidson consumers indicate that their motorcycle allows them to reach the relief from stress and a temporary freedom through consumption and other motorcycle brands allow consumers a similar experience.

5.5.2.2 Desire to re-experience

Harley-Davidson motorcycles offer two types of consumption products, on one side a material object and on the other an experience. Unlike the examples used by Lacher and Mizerski (1994) who use music as a consumption medium that can be experienced without ownership which can be enjoyed for free over various outlets, therefore, it does not have the same comparison to the brand of Harley, a Harley would need to be owned to allow the aspect of experience and re-experience to have an impact on consumption. However, prior to purchase, the consumer would imagine how the experience might be. Influences of emotions and personal feelings are taken into consideration for this (Schwarz & Clore, 1996; Schwarz, 2004; Esch et al., 2012). However, as Tully et al. (2005) consumers are not given the benefit of the doubt to have the active foresight that allows them to foresee future events and satisfaction. Prior to purchase, it remains a fantasy and the enjoyment will only occur in a post-purchase environment. Whilst it may not impact the first purchase of a Harley it will allow consumers to get more insight into Harley for subsequent Harley-Davidson motorcycle purchases.

5.5.3 Developmental

Based on previous segments (see 2.2.4.3) it is argued that masculinity is threatened by several forces such as the strengthened position of women which places pressures on the male dominance but also on social pressures that consumers wish to escape (Holt & Thompson, 2004). The male consumer finds himself in more standardised and bureaucratic environment which places additional pressures on him and his personal freedom as he is seen as a “mere earnings mechanism” (Ehrenreich, 1983, p6; Holt & Thompson, 2004).

Based on the secondary data collection and review it was established that emotions of nostalgia can influence consumption towards or away from certain products. This element will be further analysed with the addition of the primary data. Nostalgic emotions can be expressed through various means that can be thoughts of childhood or attempts to replicate certain situations based on consumer's personal experiences.

However, a developmental influence may also be seen in the consumer's selection of consumption guided by their age and personal understanding of their own situation. This can be seen in a form of progression expressed through his consumption. It allows the consumers to change his taste and desire which changes the consumption through his life.

5.5.3.1 Nostalgia

Harley represents a nostalgic brand from several standpoints. The first one is Harley's history and the perception that it has created over the years which is being emphasised by the brand. The second part of nostalgia comes in through the designs of the motorcycles which may generate nostalgic emotions. The third aspect is the nostalgic feelings of the consumer when thinking about his youth and the perception he had of Harley-Davidson.

Harley is proud of its long history of producing motorcycles and all Harley-Davidson literature places a strong focus on the beginnings of the brand, in a small shed in the United States. This is further supported by the consumers own personal experiences such as the design and appearance of the motorcycle and the memories that the consumer has with the brand. Harley's design has always been very traditional up until the recent models which underwent some more modern redesigning. Whilst this "old-School" or vintage look seems to be aesthetically pleasing, it also has the advantage of generating a variety of emotions from the consumer. Often this is related back to the difficulty of owning a Harley-Davidson when the consumer was younger which supported the image that it was rare and special. This approach is not solely on the motorcycles but also includes the design of clothing, which as outlined before indicates a current trend towards the vintage appearance of products such as leather jackets or boots that are related to motorcycle consumption objects (Motorrad, 2016). Current consumers often outlined this aspect during the data collection process.

Schindler and Holbrook (2003) have argued that nostalgic emotions can influence the consumer's decision making and selection through his life. This results in a direct connection between the experiences of the consumer's childhood and adolescence to his decision making in today's environment. This preference is especially strong within the automotive sector as it has been argued that "nostalgic preference -- that is, a general age-related preference peak-- will occur in the automotive product category" (Schindler and Holbrook, 2003, p281). These emotions of nostalgia are not as strong for female consumers in the automotive sector. Schindler and Holbrook outlined that the preferences for various categories are established at certain ages as at approximately 23 years of age for pop song preferences (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989; Laurent & Lambert-Pandraud, 2010), 33 years of age for fashion styles (Schindler & Holbrook, 1993; Laurent & Lambert-Pandraud, 2010), 14 years of age for movie stars (Holbrook & Schindler, 1994; Laurent & Lambert-Pandraud, 2010), 27 years of age for Oscar-winning motion pictures (Holbrook & Schindler, 1996; Laurent & Lambert-Pandraud, 2010), and 26 years of age for automobile styles (Schindler & Holbrook, 2003; Laurent & Lambert-Pandraud, 2010). Whilst preferences may have been created, the consumer still spends a long time riding motorcycles before buying a Harley-Davidson, 29 years as mean value for the consumers in the Harley-Davidson cluster. As Harley-Davidson can be classified as part of the automotive sector it appears that the findings of Schindler and Holbrook (2003) are suitable for Harley-Davidson consumers. Schindler and Holbrook outlined that at 26 years of age the preferences within the automotive sector are being formed and can still impact the consumption at a later stage in life. This delayed effect does not compare with other consumption items such as frequently used brands which create a preference amongst consumers. This nostalgic effect is unique as the consumer has previously owned a variety of motorcycles before reaching the point that a purchase of a Harley is completed. It also appears appropriate as the consumer has participated in the hedonic consumption of motorcycling at this stage for eight years allowing knowledge of the consumption object to increase and wider understanding and preferences to be formed.

This may be based on the appearance of the motorcycle or the image that Harley-Davidson traditionally had, nevertheless it generates a desire that the consumer wants to fulfil by purchasing a Harley-Davidson. It further strengthens the idea of a progression that is in relation to the consumer's age within this specific sector. The consumer has owned a variety of motorcycles starting at a young age, in some cases

this was before the age of 10 before gradually moving towards Harley-Davidson. It also strengthens the approach that previous influences guide their consumption today. Due to the youthful decision to motorcycle, the consumer has immersed himself in the world of motorcycling and has seen a variety of motorcycles as a result of it. As Levy (1959) established consumption does not solely take place for the abilities and features of the object of consumption but rather add meaning to the consumption.

Through these experiences, the motivation to purchase a Harley-Davidson in their middle-age is formed, either consciously or subconsciously. It is fair to assume that during their youth the current consumer would not have the financial possibilities to purchase a motorcycle referred to as the *"Rolls Royce of motorbikes"* (by Participant 15 of the Harley-Davidson Cluster and Participant 6 of the Non-Motorcycle Cluster). Through economic and personal financial changes the desire of the purchase is supported.

5.5.3.2 Economic Development

The statement by participant 4 of the Harley-Davidson cluster that he never believed that he would own a Harley-Davidson (*"I never thought I could afford a Harley-Davidson"*) is noteworthy. Through this one sentence, he outlines a development that he could not have foreseen due to widespread economic changes and he has seen his own monetary advantages in relation to previous generations.. Increasing consumption, especially of luxury hedonic goods, is motivated by the remembrance of low social status and struggle (Mazzocco et al., 2012). This reflection on low social status will increase consumption (Mazzocco et al., 2012; Rucker & Galinsky, 2008; Rucker et al., 2012). It not only appears to be a reflection by stating previous doubts of being able to afford a Harley-Davidson but also indicates Harley's status of wealth that was something special for him to be able to purchase.

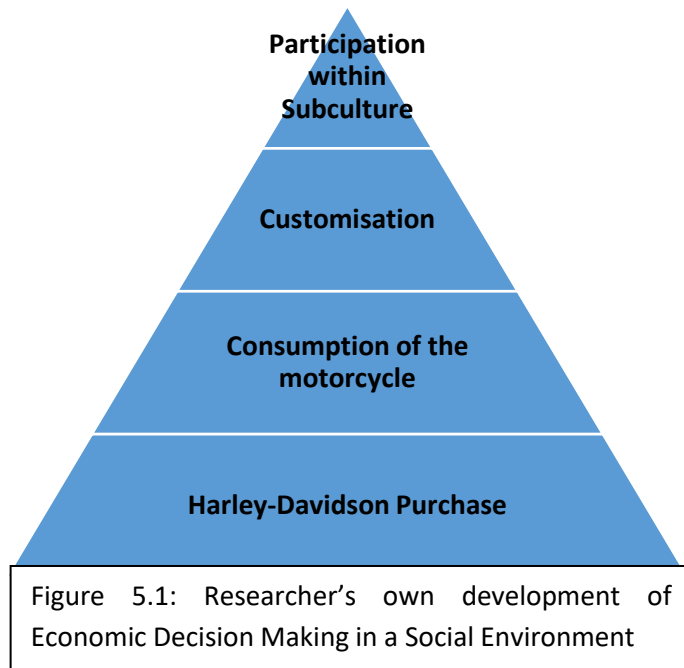
The consumer attempts to counter the emotional influence of negative memories of social inferiority and hardship by indulging in hedonic consumption. Through this compensation the consumer will enter a cycle in which he will want to remain in a similar or higher position within a social environment. This results in a cycle of compensation indicated through constant adjustments and investment (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008, 2009; Mazzocco et al., 2012, p521; Dubois et al., 2012). This cycle can be observed through participant 4's behaviour of consumption. A participant who originally never thought that he would be able to own a Harley-Davidson has entered this cycle of continuous adjustment and investment, the indicator for this is that he did

not purchase only one Harley within the 12 years of him riding Harley-Davidsons but rather has bought 7 Harley's within that timespan. This results in a purchase of a Harley nearly every two years.

5.5.4 Economic

5.5.4.1 *Economic Decision Making in a Social Environment*

This approach can be seen as applicable to the Harley-Davidson subculture in which the consumption of the product is the focal point of participation. Harley consumption needs to be seen as a tiered consumption. The first tier is the purchase of the motorcycle, the second is the consumption of the motorcycle, the third tier is alteration and customisation of the motorcycle, and the final tier is participation within the community of Harley-Davidson (see figure 5.1).



At each tier, a social rejection can occur that can change the spending habits of the consumer. The consumer will feel more motivated to invest his leisure time and money in the hedonic consumption of Harley-Davidson. As it already has been outlined a key indicator which nearly all Harley consumers commit to after the purchase is the alteration of the exhaust system by fitting an aftermarket exhaust to their Harley-Davidson. As Participant 10 describes: "The bikes don't come noisy, people make them noisy." It appears that it is a key component of the Harley-Davidson culture to make the motorcycle loud. Several participants referred to the noise as important to them, supporting the research of Schembri (2009).

5.5.4.2 Reward Spending Behaviour

As outlined regarding reward spending behaviour, there was no clear indication found to support the argument that a Harley has been purchased as a personal reward for reaching a certain stage. The closest was Participant 9 it can be seen in chapter 4.5.3.2.1. However, he found £5,000 in a filing cabinet that allowed him to disregard his previous set goals and purchase a Harley-Davidson sooner than he intended (Participant 9: *“but then I found five grand in my filing cabinet so thought “Fuck it”¹¹”).* Other participants did not state that they purchased the motorcycle based on positive events that would allow them to maintain the status quo and also did not mention anything that could be linked to a reward spending behaviour.

5.5.5 Psycho-Social

5.5.5.1 Threatened Masculinity

For this segment the information from chapter 5.2.4.3.1 can be used which allows insight into the consumption in regard to threatened masculinity. Whilst no hard evidence can be found that Harley-Davidson is seen as the response to a threatened masculine identity it can be observed that it is being used as a temporary desertion from responsibilities and pressures that are on the shoulders of the motorcyclist. Whilst no indication from the participants has been given in regard to their position the consumption of the motorcycle can be and should be seen as a rebellious act to counter social or personal pressures.

5.5.5.2 Desire to Re-experience

Through the interviews with the consumers of Harley-Davidson it became apparent that the enjoyment that consumers receive through continuous consumption only occurs post-purchase. This supports the argument of Tully (2005) where the consumer does not have the appropriate foresight to know how much satisfaction he or she will receive. Furthermore, a variety of consumers did not enjoy their Harley-Davidson immediately and it took time for them to enjoy it fully. Participant 18 expressed this well: *“I actually bought it without actually really liking it, if that makes sense. It may sound silly, but two wheels are in ma blood and I wanted to stay riding bikes, and this was the only way to do it. But the more I’ve had it, the more I use it,*

¹¹ Whilst explicit language it has been decided to not alter this expression as it reflects a strong emotional expression

the more I love it and now I really like it.” Although the circumstances for participant 18 were a cause for his consumption it still expressed his development of enjoyment. Similarly, participant 21 expressed his change of emotions towards Harley in the following way: *“I really didn’t like the idea of a Harley, it was either a Ducati or a Harley. But then I decided to go for a Harley.”*

Whilst consumers may not have the foresight to understand future events they are able to learn and adapt to them. The first purchase may not be, but future purchases are impacted by the experiences and desire to re-experience as the consumer has created a preference and understanding that allows him to progress through the consumption of Harley-Davidson. The factor that would also need to be considered is that it is not just one Harley that consumers buy but rather they own several Harley-Davidsons over time. At the point of the original purchase, the consumer is not able to understand the future and dislike can be expressed, as seen in the two examples above. This changes over time allowing the consumer to purchase another Harley at a later stage.

5.5.6 Developmental

5.5.6.1 Nostalgia

As outlined earlier there appears to be an influence of nostalgia on the consumption of Harley-Davidson. This is related to the historical rarity of the brand. This motivated a variety of consumers to purchase a Harley-Davidson as seen in chapter 4.2.1.2.

The memory of past times when Harley-Davidson’s were difficult to own, based on rarity and costs, current consumers feel more motivated to purchase to be able to say that they own a Harley-Davidson. The development in this area is of significance as consumers are often focused on the heritage of the brand that they are purchasing. With Harley-Davidson more so than with any other brand because Harley plays a lot on this particular aspect.

Modern-day Harley consumption does not have the same barriers that it historically had, as participant 15 adds to his statement that *“Now everybody can have one.”* Nevertheless, there can be some evidence found of the perception the consumer had from his youth that impacts his consumption currently.

5.5.6.2 Economic Development

A further factor to be considered is the personal economic development of the consumer. As outlined by participant 4 of the Harley-Davidson cluster, he did not believe that he would ever be in a position that would allow him to purchase a Harley-Davidson. However, based on financial stability he was not only able to purchase one Harley-Davidson in his life but owned seven Harley's overall. Harley is often seen as the pinnacle or the "*Rolls-Royce of Motorcycles*" (as described by Participant 15 of the Harley-Davidson and Participant 6 of the Non-Motorcycle Cluster). Through the continuous ownership that the consumers indicated it appears that they do not wish to take a step back from their current consumption and remain loyal to the brand of Harley-Davidson from the point of their first purchase (Rucker & Galinsky, 2008; Mazzocco et al., 2012; Dubois et al., 2012). As outlined in the literature, this can be observed through the constant readjustment to remain in a perceived position by fellow Harley-Davidson consumers, other motorcyclists, and outsiders. The memories of low social status and financial struggles can further enhance the consumption of frivolous hedonic consumption (Mazzocco et al., 2012).

5.5.7 Review of discussion

Reviewing the discussion of this segment, it can be argued that a variety of factors come into play when looking at the consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles, which can be linked to economic, psycho-social, and developmental approaches. Economic decision making within a social environment can support further consumption but may not be the case for the initial purchase behaviour. The fear of rejection may guide the consumer to adapt to the culture in more depth than originally intended, a significant indication for this is the near always present customisation of the exhaust system to give their Harley the well-known noise level. It might be assumed that without this alteration the consumer would receive some form of rejection from his fellow Harley consumers. Close to no evidence was found that can be potentially linked to a reward spending behaviour amongst Harley-Davidson consumers. Consumers did not purchase their motorcycle for the purpose of improving or maintaining a certain status quo but rather purchased the motorcycle on the basis of the enjoyment that may result from it.

From a psycho-social perspective, threatened masculinity has been described earlier as a potential reason for the consumption to occur. Whilst participants did not state

that they feel threatened in regard to their masculinity it can be argued that the motorcycle is an indication of their desire for temporary escape from social or personal pressures. This does not mean that the motorcycle is only to be used during times of worry but that it is used for stress-relief under certain circumstances.

The motorcycle represents a unique consumption as it is a material object used for experiential consumption. It is difficult to find a comparison of a similar nature. It allows the consumer to re-experience the object often within a social environment until the point of sale of the motorcycle. Prior to the purchase these experiences can only be part of a fantasy and may not become reality as the consumer intends it to be. This allows for the argument that whilst it is an experiential consumption object it cannot be considered as influential prior to the first Harley-Davidson purchase. The subsequent purchases may be supported through it as the consumer has more of an understanding and a broader knowledge of the object and community that he wants to continue to be part of.

Developmental aspects need to be considered as well as they can indicate underlying emotions that can influence the consumption further. Two aspects have been considered, nostalgia and personal economic development. Nostalgia within the automotive industry has been outlined as very influential in particular to male consumers. Ageing consumers are often trapped within their previous preferences that do not allow for change and innovation to occur. If it should occur it is often a long-term process. Well-known and long-established brands are often preferred by older consumers which can support the purchase of a product that is seen as iconic such as Harley-Davidson. In this instance, the development can be seen as a step back, back to the known.

Additionally, personal economic developments will need to be considered. Often current Harley consumers can be guided through their dreams of owning a Harley-Davidson, a target that they often did not expect to reach. Whilst the Rolls Royce of motorcycles was a dream, their financial situation has improved which allowed the purchase of a dream and consumers purchase several over time as a continuance of their dream. The initial purchase is the fulfilment of a dream, subsequent purchases need to be regarded as a continuance of their desire and a fear of losing out.

5.6 How can this be modelled to explain hedonic consumption within a framework that considers the economic risks involved?

Through previous parts of the discussion, it has become more apparent that external and internal influences are at play that can support or in some cases even go as far as slowing consumption down. Extrinsic factors can include social pressures but can also include more personal influences such as family within this consumption. Intrinsic factors can be observed in a variety of aspects but the predominant one appears to be how the consumer sees Harley-Davidson and what is he willing to do with and for it. For this, the risk evaluation is a key factor that can motivate or hinder the consumption. However, hindrance can be influenced by the emotions that the consumer has towards the object of consumption.

5.6.1 External

As outlined in section 5.2.1.2.1 the peer pressure to purchase a Harley-Davidson can also be reversed in the sense that consumption does not occur or is delayed. Harley-Davidson has a customer base that is of a more mature age, a stigma that is often used to convince potential consumers to not purchase a Harley-Davidson. However, chapter 1 outlined the impact of external forces that come into play in a post-purchase environment. The consumer wishes to remain part of a subculture through which the consumer reaches a sense of personal achievement as it has been outlined by Celsi et al. (1993).

Another external factor that may influence consumption other than peer pressure is the aspect of family. Some consumer may stop riding motorcycles during the period of marriage and/or childbirth from where they are waiting for children to be self-sustaining individuals before returning to their hobby. The decision to return to motorcycling will be made at this point and the consumer is looking for a suitable motorcycle that he finds appropriate not just for his age but also his personal situation. The discussion on personal and financial risks identified that both risk factors do not affect consumption, rather the opposite is the case as both consumers and non-consumers perceive Harley-Davidson motorcycles as less dangerous in comparison to other brands of motorcycle. This results in the greater likelihood of a consumer purchasing a Harley-Davidson. In the model introduced in section 2.5.5 (p85 and Figure 2.2) extrinsic and intrinsic influences are illustrated was of the same value. Based on the discussion with Harley-Davidson consumers it was possible to identify

that the consumer intrinsic aspects are ranked higher than extrinsic influences, thus supporting the model highlighted in Figure 2.2 on p98. Whilst extrinsic influences may delay the consumption they does not appear to prevent them.

5.6.2 Internal

Extrinsic influences lead to an intrinsic stimulus. Intrinsic stimuli have been argued previously to be closely linked to affect heuristics. It is therefore dependent on how the consumer sees the object of consumption allowing the intrapersonal discussion to lead the decision-making process. Previously the example of liquorice outlined that if a consumer does not like liquorice consumption of liquorice-based products would not occur. A similar approach can be taken for the motorcycle world in which the consumer's personal perception of the hedonic consumption of motorcycles, in general, is important for its potential consumption. A biased product evaluation and its possible benefits or downfalls depending on whether or not the product is liked and may generate a lifelong bias (Laurent & Lambert-Pandraud, 2010, Zhou et al., 2011, Connell et al., 2014). In order to understand the impact of this preference, the wider picture needs to be seen. Consumers began motorcycling had a mean value of 18 years of age, which signifies an early starting age to motorcycling during which the preference for motorcycling has already been formed and is now fully executed. A consumer who started to motorcycle in their teenage years is significantly more likely to purchase a Harley-Davidson at one point in his lifetime than somebody who did not ride motorcycles at that time. Motorcycling is either liked or not liked, similar to the liquorice example, and consumers who appreciate the product are more likely to purchase related products. The taste may change, resulting in a delayed preference at a later stage in the consumer's life, meaning that whilst he did not like Harley-Davidsons when he was younger or before the purchase it can change to an appreciation at a later stage in the consumer's life.

Both personal and financial risks are part of the intrinsic discussion the consumer will have in which he attempts to justify the purchase through explanation that whilst it may be seen as a frivolous hedonic consumption it can also be seen as a sensible decision from a safety aspect. From a consumer's perspective, the purchase of a

Harley makes sense. From a non-motorcyclists perspective the overarching fear of motorcycling are too great for them to see the benefits of motorcycling in general.

5.6.3 Four dimensions of Consumption

The four dimensions are a key element to the research which combine several important consumer behaviour aspects which are integral parts of consumer behaviour. Many of the introduced aspects can only occur in a post-purchase environment and do not influence the consumption at an earlier stage. Post-purchase elements in regard to integration and classification within the subculture can become important as consumption may be enhanced through it in a manner that was not previously anticipated by the consumer. Several Harley-Davidson consumers outlined that particular aspect during the interview stage, that their consumption of the product exceeded their original intentions. Schembri (2009) utilised Holt's four dimensions of consumption (1995) within the Harley-Davidson subculture and found it applicable to her research. However, the research was to identify the consumer behaviour of consumers within an existing subculture that were already integrated and accepted within the Harley-Davidson community. The research was lacking attempts to identify the motivation used to outline the consumer's motivation to participate in the subculture in the first place and how this decision-making process occurs. For the post-purchase environment all attributes of Holt's four dimensions are met in some form by the Harley-Davidson community and its participants.

5.6.3.1 Consumption as Experience

Consumption as experiences establishes the way things are from the consumer's perspective within a social environment (Holt, 1995). Through the shared definition of this secondary framework, the consumption can be intensified for the consumer as the overall experience reaches new heights. The domain-specific understanding in place allows the consumer to "make sense of the situation, roles, actions, and objects" (Geertz, 1973; Holt, 1995, p3). The shared lens prior to the purchase of a Harley-Davidson can be through the eyes of the motorcycle community itself rather than a subcategory of it. This shared lens may often attempt to prevent the purchase of a Harley but the consumer still remains drawn to it with the result of the purchase occurring at a later stage. This, in turn, has the impact that previous voices advocating against the purchase can look through a new lens and receive a new understanding

of the domain that he has already been participating in. This impact can be related back to the internal and external influences on third tier purchases. For clarification see figure 5.4.

The primary member of the motorcycle social circle may receive some friendly mockery for his purchase but ultimately contributes to a potential change in the social circle's perception of motorcycles. Often during the interviews, the participants claimed to be the initial purchaser which may be true or false. This allows the overall domain-specific understanding of the social motorcyclist group to be altered and exchanged for the new understanding of the Harley community as described by Schembri (2009).

5.6.3.2 Consumption as Integration

As Holt (1995) outlined in his own work, consumption as integration consists of three aspects; assimilation, producing, and personalising. Assimilation is not the reason why consumption is occurring but rather it symbolises the manner in which consumption occurs. Producing requires participation of the consumer in which he can not only indicate his expertise about the object of consumption but also indicate himself as an active consumer. The active participation and interaction with the object of consumption can be observed in two ways, an active and a passive form of consumption. The active participation manner is indicated through the use of the motorcycle whereas the passive participation is observed in the socialising aspect that is connected to the object of consumption. Personalising allows the consumer to manipulate the object suitable for the consumer's self-identity and the overarching subculture that he has entered through the purchase.

5.6.3.2.1 Assimilation

The assimilation process can only occur in a post-purchase environment in which the consumer immerses himself in the subculture through which the object of consumption becomes a part of his identity. Within Harley-Davidson, as Schembri (2009) also identified the identity of the brand is very strong and the consumer lets the brand of Harley become a part of his personal identity. As indicated the assimilation is the pathway of the consumer from novice to expert (Holt, 1995). Prior to the purchase, it is doubtful that the quest for a new identity by the consumer is

reflected in his purchasing behaviour for the first Harley-Davidson. Subsequent purchases may be impacted by it as it allows the consumer to walk further along the path to becoming an expert.

Whilst this case can be argued, it can also be argued that in the bigger picture of the community of motorcyclists the purchase of a Harley allows him to reach a new height in social standing and acceptance.

5.6.3.2.2 Producing

As the introduction outlined, active participation can be presented in two ways, active and passive consumption. Active consumption is presented through the use of the motorcycle and actively riding it whereas passive consumption can be indicated through visits to the Harley-Davidson dealership or meets. Both aspects indicate an active participation and represent membership of the subculture of Harley.

5.6.3.2.3 Personalising

Personalising allows the consumer to manipulate the object of consumption so that it becomes suitable for the self-identity of the consumer and his own personal taste. Harley-Davidson, in this case, offers a unique ability to allow its consumers to adjust their motorcycle to their own personal taste and therefore personalise the experience for themselves. This reaches further than in other parts of the automotive sector. Harley consumers may have a very different taste and understanding of what they perceive as aesthetically pleasing. Some may prefer to have a motorcycle that is traditionally styled with a lot of chrome, as one participant described himself as a “Chromosexual” outlining his preference, whereas others appear to have the more modern design in their mind in which less chrome is present and black becomes the most dominant colour of the motorcycle. Furthermore, the consumer has the ability to change as much as he would like on the motorcycle and a lot of items can be replaced that would make it more fitting to their personal taste. As a mean value, the consumers spent over £1500 on top of the purchase cost of the motorcycle to make the bike suitable for themselves. Personalising can also be represented through tattoos or Harley insignia that indicate affiliation and affection towards the brand of Harley-Davidson.

This allows the consumer to become a more integrated member of the social environment of Harley-Davidson. As established earlier Harley consumers do not appear very interested in the object of consumption but rather prefer the social links to the specific item of consumption (Cova, 1997; Cova & Cova, 2002; Schembri, 2009).

However, this process of personalising can again only predominately occur within the post-purchase environment as the motorcycle would need to be present in order for the customisations and personalising processes to begin. Purchases after the first Harley may be guided through it prior to the purchase based on the knowledge and understanding the consumer has of the object of consumption but also the subculture.

5.6.3.3 Consumption as Classification

Consumption as classification utilises the object of consumption for classification purposes. Two approaches are to be considered; classification through objects and classification through actions. These two are interrelated and do not serve an either/or purpose. They serve the purpose to further enhance the affiliation and distinction (Mick & DeMoss, 1990; Holt, 1995).

5.6.3.3.1 Classification through Objects

As Belk (1988) outlined an integral part of who we represent and how we define ourselves is through our possessions. Status seeking consumption in this regard is of a high focus, this can include but may not be limited to housing, automobiles, clothing, and jewellery. It is an active display of our possession to the outside world. In this case, Harley-Davidson would be represented by the most obvious aspect that can be observed, the possession of a motorcycle. This may also include the intrinsic motivation to consumption of a motorcycle as the consumer may wish to seek a display of their possession by purchasing a motorcycle “to look cool” (participant 6). Clearly, this does not just include their self-perception but also external perception. Classification through objects needs to be strongly considered as an influencing factor for the consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Whilst Holt (1995) goes into detail to describe classification through objects in connection to experiential

consumption, the material object is the key feature for this particular example and should be regarded as such.

For experiential consumption Holt (1995) outlines the use of memorabilia and souvenirs to indicate their consumption through objects. This can also be connected to Harley-Davidson in regard to the insignia, souvenirs, and even tattoos that signify consumption. Harley-Davidson's third most lucrative stream of income comes from merchandise articles that allows the consumer to represent their consumption to specific events and locations. This is often represented through T-shirts that appear to have a high standpoint within the consumption of Harley as they do not just signify affiliation to the brand but also indicate the travels and experiential consumption of the consumer. This needs to be seen as an addition to the usual club and brand insignia often worn by consumers through vests or leather jackets. In relation to this research, it is fair to assume that consumption as classification is part of the consumer behaviour of Harley-Davidson consumers and represents a motivation for the consumption of a Harley motorcycle.

5.6.3.3.2 Classification through Actions

Classification through actions can also be observed in the manner in which the consumer interacts with the product of consumption. Through active participation in the subculture, the consumer is constantly adapting to the consumption related environment and gathers an in-depth understanding of certain behavioural aspects that are connected to the consumption. This could be an increased knowledge of the area but also can be observed in language that is used. The consumer has advanced to an expert in the field in his personal environment. It additionally forms a division between "us" and "them", in which "them" is interchangeable for a variety of groups. It can refer to the division between old and new customers of the brand, it may imply a division between Harley-Davidson consumers and other motorcyclists, but it also may indicate the distinction between motorcyclists and non-motorcyclists.

As illustrated in sections 6.2.1.2.2 and 6.2.4.2.2 according to present research a division between real bikers and so-called poseurs indicates that separation is in place

that could divide the group of Harley consumers into smaller fractions. However, it still appears to be an open community that is welcoming to new participants. Through these attributes of the subculture, the consumer may become more loyal to the object related to consumption and links are being formed that remain strong (Schembri, 2009). The division is extended further when looking at the way the consumer dresses, which may often indicate a certain club affiliation or connection to the brand (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995; Schembri, 2009).

However, whilst the process of classification through objects may be present for the consumers purchasing behaviour and can indicate a motivation for the consumption of Harley-Davidson products, it has to be noted that the classification through actions can only occur post-purchase as the consumer would need to be in possession of the motorcycle in order to receive a certain affiliation linked either to Harley directly or to another motorcycle club that has the Harley at its focal point.

5.6.3.4 Consumption as Play

Consumption as play consists of two main aspects, communing and socialising. Both aspects were identified by Schembri in her ethnographic research of Australian Harley consumers as important aspects of consumer behaviour. However, this research focusses on the intentions that are present prior to the purchase and how it affects the consumption manner. In this case, buying a Harley is like purchasing the key to a new environment that was not otherwise possible to enter into, the Harley needs to be owned for participation to occur. Communing is the sharing of experiences with other members of the same affiliation whereas socialising is the use of experiences to entertain other members of the group. The group affiliation is the basis for the participation. Prior to the purchase it is only a fantasy, despite the previous argument that consumers may not be given the benefit of the doubt to have an active foresight which allows them to foresee future events and satisfaction (Tully et al., 2015), evidence that the experiences of members enhance the consumption. The sharing of experiences is not just limited to present Harley consumers but is extended to motorcycle consumers in general. Examples of this approach can be seen in chapter 4.6.3.

Through examples of participant 10 and 12, it can be seen that the impact of the social aspects of Harley can be started through word of mouth and communication amongst all motorcyclists. Word of mouth makes it more appealing to follow up on purchase intentions that the consumer may or not may not have originally held.

5.6.4 Economic Risks

The involved economic impacts of the purchase may be limited based on the consumer often selling their previous motorcycle which allows them to finance their hedonic consumption. The first motorcycle that the consumer buys in his motorcycling career represents the highest risk as from this point the risks are often reduced. Furthermore, the economic risks appear to be having no impact on the consumers purchasing behaviour regardless of their annual income, as the consumer often dreams about owning a Harley-Davidson so suitable means will be found for them to reach that target.

5.6.5 Resulting Models

The resulting model outlines two aspects of the consumption. Firstly, it can be described as a chronologically dependent model which builds the basis for the consumption. The consumer will have reached an age where his taste and desires in motorcycling has changed, whilst he does not want to stop motorcycling, in general, he is reconsidering the manner he conducts the hedonic consumption of motorcycling. For some, it may have always been a dream to own a Harley-Davidson, whereas others did not have such a preference before the purchase, but both categories of consumers currently own a Harley. Whilst it can be seen as a step on the ladder of motorcycle consumption, it predominantly needs to be seen as an object that allows the consumer to continue their leisure activity of motorcycling.

The previous model indicated in Chapter 4.14 signifies the progression of a motorcyclists throughout his lengthy consumption of motorcycling before the purchase of a Harley-Davidson once he has reached an age in which he wishes to experience motorcycling differently. This can motivate the consumer to purchase a Harley-Davidson that offers him a different approach to motorcycling not just through the motorcycle itself but also when looking at the social environment that the

consumer would enter through the purchase. The tight-knit community, as described by Schembri (2009), can enhance the consumption of the motorcycle.

The second model that can impact the consumption is the model indicated in model 2 below in which the first consumer follows up on his purchase intentions allowing other motorcyclists to get a more in-depth understanding of the brand of Harley-Davidson which may generate the urge to follow their fellow motorcyclists' footsteps and purchase a Harley as well, disregarding the stigmatised mockery of Harley-Davidson's "old-man brand" image that they previously supported.

Therefore, the question is not "why do middle-aged man buy a Harley-Davidson?" but rather "when do middle-aged men buy a Harley-Davidson?" Whilst some current motorcyclists may have their reservations about Harley-Davidson at this time it is likely that they will reconsider their personal perception of Harley-Davidson at a later stage in their lives.

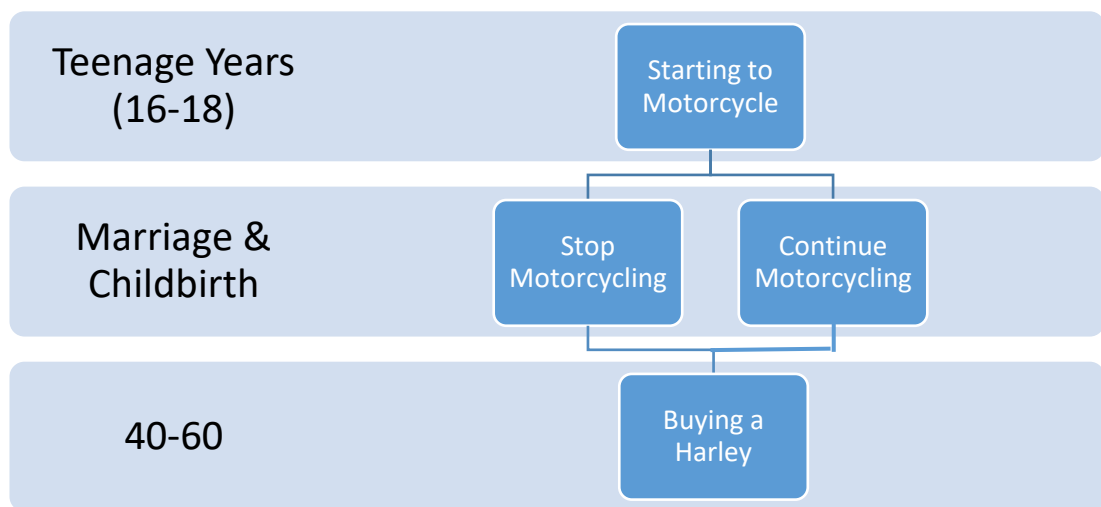


Figure 5.2: Researcher's own development of Model 1 Progression of Consumption amongst Harley-Davidson consumers between the ages of 40-60

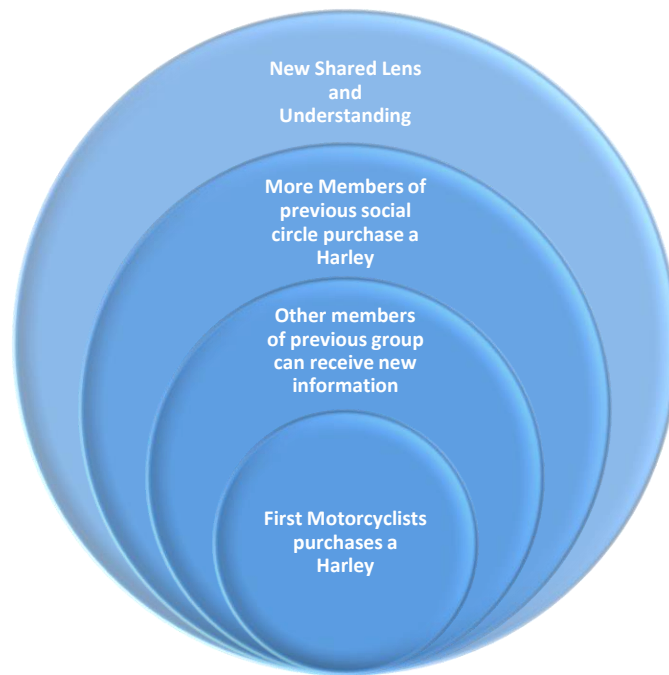


Figure 5.3: Researcher's own development of Model 2 Adaptation of a new Shared Lens amongst Harley-Davidson Consumers

5.6.6 Review of discussion

It can be argued that whilst extrinsic factors play a role in consumption it is the intrinsic factors, including emotions, which support the purchase of a Harley-Davidson. Various approaches identified by Holt (1995) and Schembri (2009) can be seen as appropriate to Harley-Davidson's subculture in a post-purchase environment but can be challenged when looking at the initial purchase of a Harley-Davidson as the motorcycle needs to be owned for certain introduced aspects to be applicable. Harley consumers do not reflect on the purchase as risky, from either personal or economic standpoints, and rather justify their purchase as suitable and less risk-seeking as it may appear at first sight.

Harley-Davidson's "old-man" image is often a hindrance to consumption as the potential consumer does not immediately want to be associated with it. Therefore, the assumption that the consumer's taste is changing and introduces a timeline to their overall motorcycle consumption is reflected in the progression timeline above. The first Harley-Davidson purchase in a motorcycle group can have a wider impact as

other potential consumers may reflect on their current consumption and may move to Harley-Davidson. Despite a previous dislike of the brand of Harley the new consumers quickly warm to the brand and wish to be part of it. Harley-Davidson is a unique brand that introduces a well-established social life to the consumption of their products, as indicated by Schembri (2009). Harley-Davidson may not be the first motorcycles that motorcyclists purchase but may well be one of the last motorcycle brands that they are associated with before retiring from motorcycling.

5.7 Further Findings

5.7.1 Progression of Consumption

During late adolescence or early adulthood (Holbrook & Schindler, 1989; Laurent & Lambert-Pandraud, 2010) preferences are formed that can influence the consumer through the rest of their lives. This influence is very important when looking at the consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. As it has already been established, the ageing consumer is influenced by preferences and choices he made in late adolescence. This can be seen in this research through the early starting age which lets the consumer participate within the world of motorcycling. Through this, a predetermination can be identified that guides the consumer through his motorcycling life, establishing the preference towards motorcycling. Whilst some consumers do not indicate an immediate affinity towards Harley-Davidson this can change over time and guides the consumer. The research of Laurent and Lambert-Pandraud (2010) indicates that older consumers indicate a preference for long-established brands based on the attachment that they have with the product. So, a long-established and well-known brand, such as Harley-Davidson, receives more attention from ageing generations. Throughout the consumers motorcycling career, a variety of motorcycles have been owned. However, with age, the consumer indicates a preference towards a slower motorcycle that allows him to continue with his leisure activity. Two factors are influential, the first is the age of the consumer and the second is the brand of Harley-Davidson. The age of the consumer is increasing, and his desires are changing instead of going fast the taste is changing to a steadier and more secure way of motorcycling. The second factor can be seen through the well-established name of Harley-Davidson which makes it more attractive for the consumer to follow up on his purchase intentions.

Laurent and Lambert-Pandraud (2010) established that older consumers are less likely to change and tendencies towards innovative consumption would require a long-term process in which the consumption can be changed. Within the environment of motorcycling, the whole of motorcycling needs to be regarded as the consumption in which the alteration would be presented through continuing to motorcycle or to stop. Consumption within this environment can change, over time, brand preferences can be changed quite easily. Motorcycling consumption cannot be compared to other preferences such as cookie preferences or in the example of Laurent and Lambert-Pandraud (2010) perfume preferences. Motorcycling allows consumers to purchase a variety of motorcycles and under the assimilation approach of consumption as integration as introduced by Holt (1995), the consumer can indicate his knowledge and expertise through his motorcycle possessions which plays a part amongst motorcyclists. Thus, it can be argued that the purchase of a Harley-Davidson occurs as part of this integration and can be seen as another step on the ladder within the motorcyclist's environment. Some participants have stated that they never liked Harley-Davidson before but now enjoy it immensely. This creates the argument that a form of progression occurs amongst ageing motorcyclists which guides them towards the purchase of a Harley-Davidson despite previous preferences, and in contrast to academic arguments that ageing consumers are less disposed to change and innovation.

However, it can also be argued that the change of their motorcycle consumption can also be linked back to preferences for long-established companies which are reminiscent of previous years. Harley-Davidson's design and technology re-introduce basic designs from yesteryear and based on its simplistic technological advancement it gives the consumer the memories of a less technology-influenced world. Whilst a variety of factors will lead the consumer to the consumption of Harley-Davidson products, the predominant aspect appears to be the factor of age. This aspect is always covered in the consumers stories and can be identified through a variety of other features, including the starting age to motorcycling, the number of motorcycles owned throughout the consumers motorcycling career, the age that the first Harley-Davidson was purchased and the subsequent amount of time that the consumers have waited before purchasing a Harley-Davidson (Starting age - Age first Harley

purchase= Length of wait). As established in the data analysis this wait has a mean value of 29 years of motorcycling. Harley is often criticised for the old-man brand that it represents but this should not be seen as a deterrence as they provide a product for which there is a specific demand. Harley is filling that gap and allows their consumers, through their product, to continue to motorcycle.

The following paragraph is based on the mean values that have been established through the data collection and analysis. The consumer started to motorcycle at 18 years owned 19 motorbikes during that period, three Harley Davidson, and 16 non-Harley-Davidson motorcycles. The first purchase of a Harley was conducted at the age of 47 signifying the late starting age to Harley. However, this does not mean that there is a continuous ownership of a motorcycle as some may temporarily stop to ride and wait until their children or other situation allows them to return to their hobby. After such a break the consumer decides to purchase a Harley.

Some consumers have also outlined a plan for when they are unfit to ride two-wheeled motorcycles and do not feel safe enough to control a traditional motorcycle anymore. At this point, they intend to purchase a Trike or a Three-wheeler motorcycle. This may lead them away from Harley again although it may be assumed that they will purchase a Trike from Harley-Davidson as at this point, they are already integrated in the subculture of Harley-Davidson and wish to remain a part of that subculture.

5.7.2 Optimism and Pessimism

Due to the high-risk leisure activity that the consumer would enter it was decided to ask the participants whether they would consider themselves as more optimistic or as more pessimistic. It needs to be noted that not all participants of the Harley-Davidson Cluster were asked this question in order to not interrupt the flow of the interview.

It was found that 89% of the Harley-Davidson cluster would consider themselves as being more optimistic whereas only 42% of the Non-motorcycle cluster stated that they are optimistic leaving the majority of this cluster with a more pessimistic outlook. In comparison, only one Harley Cluster participant stated that he has a more pessimistic perspective.

As interesting as this particular aspect may seem it is also important to be cautious with its use as two factors come into play when analysing it. The first one is that both clusters discussed the risk involved with motorcycling within the interview. This might be reflected in their answer for this particular question as they have been

unintentionally guided towards that through the previous questions. The second factor why this information has to be used cautiously is that a current Harley-Davidson consumer would always tend to defend motorcycling as not as risky as it appears, through sentences as mentioned earlier “that it’s dangerous to get out of bed in the morning.” This particular factor is strongly reflected in Tversky and Kahneman’s anchoring bias in which the personal feelings towards a product is decisive of how risks, either financially or risk of life, may be regarded (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). The non-motorcycle cluster would potentially exaggerate the involved risks which might make them feel more pessimistic whereas Harley consumers would downplay them which may result in them feeling more optimistic.

5.7.3 No Regret

As outlined in Chapter 4.10 it is apparent that the consumer did not regret the purchase of a Harley-Davidson at any point so far with the knowledge that he had at the point of the interview in which he was able to reflect on the personal and economic risks with considerations of all of his experiences. Often the consumers' regret was only that he wished that he would have purchased a Harley-Davidson sooner than he did. This reflection indicates that extrinsic and intrinsic forces are in play in the lead up to the purchase but decelerate at some point before the actual completion. This may be in connection to a friend’s mockery, the Harley’s old man image. However, the emotional connection to Harley and the desire to own a Harley will outweigh the potential criticism allowing the consumer to indulge in this frivolous hedonic consumption.

5.7.4 Why does Harley-Davidson Consumption not always occur?

A question that is also important to ask is why consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles does not always occur. This can be related to one key aspect, the starting age to motorcycle. Harley consumers indicated two things; a young starting age to motorcycling and a late starting age to Harley-Davidson. Non-motorcyclists did not have the initial motivation to commit to motorcycling, predominantly out of personal risk reasons, and therefore have not been able to create a motorcycling preference. The decision to not ride motorcycles also impacts the decision to potentially purchase a Harley-Davidson. A variety of non-motorcyclists have indicated that they have briefly reflected about obtaining a motorcycle license and buying a motorcycle but did not

follow through with the thought process which would have put them in a position that would have allowed them to ride a Harley-Davidson. Non-motorcyclists do not have the intention of owning a motorcycle because the involved risks are simply too high for them and outweigh the benefits.

The decision for motorcyclists to start motorcycling at a young age supports future consumption, and as outlined at several stages of this research, guides them towards the purchase of a Harley-Davidson even if a dislike towards Harley is present at one point during their motorcycling career. The decision to motorcycle is a key component for future consumption and further strengthens the introduced progression of consumption.

5.7.5 Age, race, and gender of Harley-Davidson consumers

During the data collection for this particular research, the researcher not only conducted interviews but also used observation as a form of information gathering. During these observations it became apparent that the consumer base of Scottish Harley-Davidson consumers are predominantly white and within the age specifications that have been set for this particular research. During this process the researcher encountered one young man entering the dealership with his father who was there to purchase some merchandise articles. The young person whilst being present in the dealership was not an active Harley-Davidson consumer. For the ages above the set requirements the researcher identified another potential consumer who was present in the Harley-Davidson dealership. Based on assumptions the researcher approached the potential consumer and it became apparent that he was above the age limits. It additionally turned out that he used to ride Harley-Davidson's but terminated this leisure activity due to bad health. Nevertheless, he frequented the dealership and remained a part of the community.

Additionally, as discussed within the data analysis chapter 4.4, one interviewee was from India on a visit to Edinburgh. Whilst only a small contribution to the overall thesis, this added an international perspective to the research and another element of race to the research. During the interview with participant 7 it became apparent that the attitude towards Harley-Davidson was similar to the aspects outlined by British Harley-Davidson consumers. He was welcomed by the community in Edinburgh as other participants of the study were interested in his journey to the dealership in Edinburgh.

Finding a predominately white and middle-aged community was previously anticipated by the researcher. Articles from Preston (2015) with the title “Harley-Davidson's reputation as an 'old, white-guy brand' may be its downfall” or the Johnson's work titled Harley Davidson has a Middle-Aged White Guy Problem” (2016). Additionally, it is not surprising to identify a predominantly white community in Scotland whose ethnicity demographic is 96% white (Scottish Government, 2019). If this research were to be conducted in another geographical location with a different ethnicity background these results may change and Harley-Davidson's “old, white-guy problem” may not be supported. However, for this research, the input of the participant 7 was invaluable in terms of adding to knowledge and representing an Asian perspective to the research.

It was of further interest to the research, that Harley-Davidson consumers encountered were male. This was previously anticipated, during the period of secondary research. This, however, does not exclude women as Harley-Davidson consumers. During the interview phase the partner of the Harley-Davidson consumer was sometimes present, this facilitated the information gathering and verification of the experience of the main participant. The partner was either not involved in the consumption of the motorcycle or was a passive consumer by sitting on the backseat of the motorcycle during rides or tours. As previously argued, female motorcyclists are currently in the minority but represent a growing share in motorcycling as a whole. Ten years ago, female motorcyclists made up less than 10% of motorcyclists, today, they account for close to 20% of motorcyclists (Brown, 2018).

5.7.6 Progression of Consumption as Development as related to Harley-Davidson

Within the data analysis, the idea of a progression of consumption has been established. This concept requires more input from the Harley-Davidson consumers to establish an appropriate argument that consumption of Harley-Davidson products are not based on attempts to look younger or more attractive but rather indicate an awareness of their age and a change of taste.

The focus of this research is on Harley-Davidson and the old man brand that it represents. However, a wider perception needs to be considered briefly. As outlined previously, the starting age for motorcycling was at 18 years and the first Harley was purchased at age 47. The more mature generation of Harley consumers is not being

formed through a Mid-life crisis as often suggested but rather Harley is offering its ageing potential consumers a way to continue their hobby. Yes, age plays a role within this consumption but not the role that is often assumed. The consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles is driven through an awareness of age rather than a mid-life crisis. The purchase is not due to a fear of getting older, but an awareness of their age and an adaptation in their desires, instead of going fast it is to enjoy the ride and the scenery, and their physical abilities. The examples outlined in Chapter 4.9 indicate the link between age and their current consumption, often expressed through a form of exclusion rather than a justification:

For some consumer the purchase of a Harley might be the final motorcycle brand that they will buy, some also offer an insight to a continuance of their consumption through the purchase of a trike in order to continue their hobby of motorcycling, as seen in the examples in Chapter 4.9.2.

Based on the interviews with the Harley-Davidson consumers it appears that they perceive their consumption as suitable for their current age and situation. They are aware of their personal condition and reflect on it before purchasing a motorcycle

Through these two examples, it can be illustrated that the decision to purchase a Harley often is not an emotional purchase but due to other factors such as physical health. They see themselves as too old for a sports bike but still fit enough to ride a two-wheeled motorcycle before potentially moving on to a three-wheeled motorcycle.

The progression timeline as outlined in Figure 5.3 (p242) can be established that outlines the consumer's pathway up to the purchase of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle. An extension can be added that will also indicate a continuity of the progression through the purchase of a Trike, however, that would require more investigation and any future research would need to consider how this extension is carried out and which influencing factors are involved in the decision-making process.

Chapter Six - Conclusion

Chapter Six- Conclusion

The concluding chapter of this research will sum up the research and illustrate its key components to increase understanding of consumer behaviour with the focus on Harley-Davidson consumers. In order to do so, a detailed summary will be given of the previous chapters to allow for a clear understanding of the research itself.

The aim of this research was to investigate consumer behaviour in regard to consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles amongst middle-aged men within the area of Edinburgh. The **first** chapter set the research aim, objectives and research questions and also introduced key literature in order to gather an understanding of the framework that has been selected for this research. The **second** chapter focused on a comprehensive literature review gathering information from areas important to research, this includes consumer behavioural, psychological, sociological literature with an additional focus on risk perception and other factors that may influence the consumer decision-making process. Through a detailed debate in Chapter **two**, the methodological and philosophical approaches were illustrated. Chapter **three** focused on the selected method for this particular research whilst also providing explanation of how the data collection process was to be conducted and subsequently analysed. In chapter **four**, the findings of the collected data have been reported and analysed accordingly. Chapter **five** offered a discussion of these findings. The discussion outlines a development of consumption leading to the motivation to consume Harley-Davidson motorcycles, whilst a large number of factors were consistent with current literature certain aspects could not be classified under the previous knowledge within consumer behaviour and therefore extend the knowledge within the literature. This final chapter outlines key elements of this research based on the findings and discussion and illustrates the original contribution to knowledge which further strengthens the understanding of consumer behaviour. Lastly, recommendations for future research are presented, in which extensions of this study could be used to understand other approaches of consumption.

The objective of this research was to identify purchase intention. This study was focused on the consumers of Harley-Davidson and their purchase intentions.

However, previous research regarded this issue from a post-purchase environment and did not provide a reason for this consumption to occur. Through the interviews it was possible to gather an understanding of why his particular consumption takes place. These findings are contrary to the popular belief of the purchase intentions of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. It is hoped that this research is not only useful to Harley-Davidson but also changes the public perception of its consumers.

6.1 Research Aim

The aim of this research was to explore the consumer behaviour of middle-aged Harley-Davidson consumers based in Edinburgh through which a higher level of understanding of consumption processes may be achieved. Through the qualitative research, using a comparative case study approach, a unique European perspective is provided that enhances the understanding of consumer behaviour of male, middle-aged, Harley-Davidson consumers.

6.2 Research Objectives

The following objectives were set for the research which were designed to support the research aim:

1. To understand the consumer behaviour of Scottish Harley-Davidson consumers aged 40 to 60 years.
2. To develop a comprehensive literature review of consumer behaviour and its application and implication for Harley-Davidson consumers.
3. To identify motivational factors that have supported the decision-making process for Harley consumers to indulge in the hedonic consumption of the subcultural environment of Harley-Davidson.
4. To enhance the understanding of consumer behaviour.

In the following manner the research objectives were achieved:

1. The objective was to understand consumer behaviour of Harley-Davidson consumers aged 40 to 60 years of age in Scotland. This was reached through the qualitative interviewing process in which consumers were able to express their lived experiences in the study. This collected data has been extensively used for this research and builds the basis for a better understanding of consumer behaviour of male, middle-aged Harley-Davidson consumers.
2. The objective was to develop a comprehensive literature review of consumer behaviour and its application and implication for Harley-Davidson consumers.

This has been achieved by an extensive literature review that focusses on specific aspects of consumer behaviour that may be relevant to middle-aged Harley-Davidson consumers. Research by Schouten and McAlexander (1995) and Schembri (2009) were particularly revealing on the subculture of Harley-Davidson consumers prior to the interviewing process taking place.

3. The third research objective was to identify motivational factors that have supported the decision-making process for Harley consumers to indulge in the hedonic consumption of the subcultural environment of Harley-Davidson. This was achieved in the data collection and subsequent data analysis process. Specific motivational factors were identified that contribute to the purchase of a Harley-Davidson that is based on a progression consumption.
4. The final research objective was to enhance a better understanding of consumer behaviour. Whilst this research may not revolutionise the understanding of consumer behaviour and the way that consumer behaviour is being examined, it adds to the overall understanding of consumer behaviour. Through the unique European perspective of male Harley-Davidson consumers understanding of consumer behaviour has been developed further.

6.3 Reviewing the research questions

The research questions that are guiding this research, as introduced in Chapter **One**, will be reiterated in this segment of the conclusion.

6.3.1 What are the psychological, social, and cultural factors that elicit hedonic consumption amongst British males between the ages of 40 and 60?

6.3.1.1 Psychology

From a psychological standpoint, depending on economic wealth and financial situation material goods can be preferred over experiential consumption. However, Harley-Davidson allows the consumer to purchase a material good that is utilised for experiential consumption. This form of hedonic consumption can be described as unique within hedonic consumption. Additionally, it needs to be argued that the purchase of a Harley is an emotional purchase as often the consumer has been dreaming about the ownership of a Harley-Davidson from a young age which guides the consumption at a later stage in the consumer's life. The involvement of desire that

creates the urge for consumption can be a long-lasting preference for the consumer as the steady flow of fantasies and feelings influence the consumer in his consumption. This can be reflected in Harley's strong brand image which reaches the iconic status amongst motorcyclists and non-motorcyclists.

However, whilst anticipation of consumption can increase the pleasure of actual consumption, satisfaction and happiness can only occur retrospectively to the consumption itself. For this, the object of consumption, in this case, a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, needs to be owned by the consumer to experience it accordingly. Prior to the purchase, the emotions are only a fantasy and the consumer must not be given the benefit of the doubt to foresee future satisfaction and happiness that may be generated through the consumption. The primary aspect, in this case, is the satisfaction of achieving a lifelong dream that the consumer is fulfilling through the purchase. However, some participants of the study have indicated that they used to perceive Harley critically and did not have a purchase intention to purchase a Harley motorcycle. Despite the original animosity towards Harley-Davidson they have guided through a progression of their own motorcycle consumption to purchase a Harley-Davidson.

6.3.1.2 Social

Social influences can be observed through various streams, such as friends or family, which may influence the consumption towards or away from certain products. In regard to Harley-Davidson a unique discrimination often occurs that is either related to the motorcycles itself for not being as technologically advanced as others might be or in connection to the brand which is often seen as a brand owned by ageing consumers. This mockery introduces a peer-pressure away from the consumption and may prevent consumption for a period of time. However, often the peers that have been voicing the mockery decide to also invest their leisure time in riding a Harley-Davidson. Whilst social pressures are in place it can be argued that these are only temporary and that consumers will eventually gravitate towards the purchase of a Harley, even if it is only in connection to its comfort.

Within the world of Harley consumers, the real bikers and poseur differentiation may be in place as consumers adapt to a new subculture in which the consumption of the objects occurs. No motorcyclists would describe themselves as a poseur but they usually all consider themselves as real bikers. This social context within the subculture of Harley-Davidson may enhance the consumption but only in a post-purchase environment as the motorcycle has to be owned in order for participation in the object related subculture to occur.

However, as much as attempts to differentiate themselves from other fellow Harley consumers is in place, the subculture of Harley-Davidson is open to new members and supports them in their participation with a welcoming subculture. The statement that a welder can sit down with a bank president and talk the same language can be seen as correct, as the key component for the interaction is the Harley-Davidson and not their social status outside the subculture.

6.3.1.3 Cultural

Cultural influences can also be observed that may enhance the consumption. The creation of a temporary sanctuary can indicate the consumers desire to escape day-to-day worries through which he seeks deliberation. The desire for personal autonomy amongst motorcyclists is not to be underestimated as the motorcycle is often used as a form of stress relief that allows the consumer to temporarily forget about their concerns. This freedom has often been related to the movie of Easy Rider in which the coolness of the consumption is represented in a deliberated form, a form of consumption that Harley consumers appear to wish to replicate. Whilst it is doubtful that Harley consumers differ from other motorcyclists or achieve a higher sense of deliberation and freedom through their consumption as consumers of a different motorcycle brand, it still needs to be considered for the purposes of consumption.

Another cultural aspect that would need to be considered is the overarching American culture which closely interlinks the consumption object with its American roots. The “American legend” is often filled with American symbolism such as the eagle or references to freedom. The perception of Scottish Harley-Davidson consumers can

vary as some perceive it as Americana, which they appreciate, whereas others may attempt to distance themselves from it and add a component that would make it more suitable for their personal identity and nationality. Scottish Harley consumers often point out the Scottish heritage and influence the American company has, this approach can be compared to the findings of Schembri (2009). Whilst the company's American roots appear to be accepted they do not attribute to a motivational factor that would support the consumption.

6.3.2 How do these factors impact their attitudes towards their personal and household financial risk?

In the world of motorcycling, there are two elements of risk involved, personal and financial risks. The personal risks are based on the dangerous leisure activity of motorcycling. As pointed out, motorcyclists in Scotland make up only 1% of traffic on the road but account for around 13% of fatalities (Lynam et al., 2001). This outlines the high-risk aspect of the leisure activity of motorcycling and needs to be discussed with motorcyclists to gather their perception of their personal consumption in connection with the involved personal risk. Additionally, the purchase of a Harley-Davidson is a costly leisure activity which the consumer would need to cover in order to participate in the subculture of Harley-Davidson. Both elements allow a greater understanding of the community's mentality towards risk.

6.3.2.1 Risk and Safety Perception

The involved personal risks are a key component to motorcycling and outline the main reason for non-motorcyclists to not participate in the leisure activity of motorcycling. Motorcyclists on the other hand understand the risk and accept them as a part of it. This creates a dissonance of risk perception one side, the non-motorcyclists, see motorcycling as too dangerous which outweighs the possible benefits. The other side, the Harley consumer, see and understand the involved risk but argue that it is not as risky as it appears. Risk takers do not indicate a stronger preference for risk but rather create an overly optimistic perception of risk (Cooper et al., 1988; Weber et al., 2002), through which a personal understanding is created of being able to control the risks at hand through skill and handling of information (March and Shapira, 1987; Weber et al., 2002). Through the control motorcyclists have over the object of consumption a

different perception is indicated. Motorcyclists understand that it is more risk seeking to ride a motorcycle in comparison to a car but also indicate that they do not see themselves as a risk-seeking or thrill-seeking.

As established in previous chapters, an indication for the acceptance and understanding of the involved risks is outlined through the ownership of a motorcycle license. The consumer not only indicates his interest in the leisure activity of motorcycling but also illustrates that he willingly accepts them. Non-motorcyclists have not reached the point of a motorcycle license which represents a hurdle for them and supports that they are not willing to accept the involved risks of motorcycling.

6.3.2.2 Affect heuristic

In previous chapters, it was outlined that the consumer's perception of the object of consumption is also decisive as to how he perceives the involved risks that come along with it. This can be both financial and personal risk. If a consumer likes a product he perceives its risks as less severe and underestimates them whereas a consumer who does not like a product would exaggerate the involved risks which will have the subsequent reaction that consumption will not occur. In this case, the consumption of motorcycles, in general, will need to be seen as the object of consumption. A non-motorcyclist exaggerates the involved risks to the point that no consumption can occur whereas a motorcyclist downplays them to further support the consumption. Without the appreciation for motorcycling in the first place, the more detailed consumption of a Harley-Davidson would not be a point of discussion. Through the often early obtained motorcycle license the consumer indicates the appreciation for the leisure activity of motorcycling and may be placed on a pathway that will ultimately lead him to the consumption of a Harley-Davidson motorcycle, even if at one point he did not intend to buy a Harley-Davidson.

6.3.2.3 Reduced Risk

Furthermore, it needs to be noted that the consumer's decision to purchase a Harley-Davidson at a later stage in his life is based on a desired reduction of risk. Participants of the study have indicated that they used to ride fast motorcycles or "White knuckle

stuff", but did not wish to continue with this form of motorcycling. Current consumers wish to enjoy the ride and scenery more than attempts to beat their personal bests. Due to the nature of the product, the consumer buys through the purchase of a Harley-Davidson he already reduces his personal risks severely as he is more focused on the enjoyment rather than the speed, cornering, or overtaking manoeuvres.

Additionally, the financial aspects are reduced. Previously it was assumed that the consumer would purchase the motorcycle outright which may have an impact on the personal budget to purchase a motorcycle described as the Rolls-Royce of motorcycles. Current consumers have stated that they have sold or traded in their previous motorcycle which will have the effect that a reduction of the monetary investment occurs. Through the reduction of the purchase cost and only putting "a little on top" the emotional is also reduced making the purchase appear more affordable to the consumer. A variety of other manners of purchasing can be observed that reduces the costs and emotional strain further. This can be through purchasing the motorcycle on finance which allows the consumer to spread the costs evenly, as observed in several cases. This will have the impact that the consumer has a more laissez-faire attitude towards the financial aspect of the consumption.

Another approach that has been taken by current consumers is that the first Harley-Davidson that they have purchased is not of a brand new Harley-Davidson but rather the consumer purchased a smaller Harley-Davidson offered as a second-hand motorcycle. Through this reduction and the process of trading in the motorcyclists can achieve the dream of owning a Harley-Davidson without having to pay the full asking price.

6.3.3 What is the process by which each of the key economic, psycho-social, and developmental factors influence the decision?

Through various processes based on economic, psycho-social, and developmental factors the decision for consumption of Harley-Davidson products can be increased. Through these factors, the consumption desire will be enhanced and strengthened. For these factors, it is important to look at the motorcycling career of the consumer

rather than just the single purchase of one motorcycle. This will allow for a better understanding of the consumption behaviour.

6.3.3.1 Economic

As established, ageing consumers indicated a preference towards purchases of older, well-established brands, applicable when looking at a brand such as Harley-Davidson, which is over a century old. Despite Harley-Davidson's high purchase cost it can be argued that the purchase costs are irrelevant to the consumption itself as the consumer wishes to purchase the product for various reasons. These reasons may be that it has always been a dream to own a Harley, the consumer wishes to be a part of the Harley-Davidson subculture or the consumer has reached an age in which riding fast or off-track motorcycles does not appeal to him anymore. In the previous discussion, in chapter 5.2.3.2, it has been argued that the consumer is facing an intra-personal discussion between prudence and the emotions of indulging in frivolous consumption. The argument between old and new luxury is also made which signifies that a preference towards what is known as old luxury is in place. There is connection between the consumers' purchasing behaviour and age. Consumers do not regard a Harley-Davidson as wasted money, some explain their purchase and acceptance of the investment in that they still have the possibility to sell the motorcycle in case the future financial situation requires them to do so. It also allows the consumer to justify their consumption as not as frivolous and financially risky as it may appear at first sight.

Additionally, it appears that Harley-Davidson consumers are not motivated through a reward spending behaviour. This describes that their consumption does not appear to be enhanced through the feelings that they deserved the purchase. Only one participant stated that he originally intended to purchase a Harley for a job well done but due to an unexpected change in his financial situation he was able to purchase a Harley sooner than he originally intended.

6.3.3.2 *Psycho-Social*

Due to social pressures on the masculine entity, it is important to consider psycho-social elements that may further motivate consumption. The introduced man-of-action hero can support the consumption as the male consumer wishes to temporarily escape the social pressures and experience a relief of stress and worries through a retreat into a personal sanctuary. Within this environment, he can be observed as free. This experienced freedom can relieve the experienced stress and allows the consumer to recover from it. Evidence for this approach can be observed amongst Harley-Davidson consumers in which the experienced emotions towards the product are often related to a “stress-buster-effect”. However, it is to be challenged if Harley consumers experience a higher state of relief based on these factors as often motorcyclists of other brands and types may experience a similar form of stress relief and escape from social pressures. Through a common motorcyclist saying “Four wheels move the body. Two wheels move the soul”, it can be seen that Harley consumers may not differ from other motorcyclists in that manner. Whilst the experience may be different the result can be the same.

Another factor that would need to be considered under psycho-social factors is based on the desire to re-experience. Whilst a motorcycle represents an object of consumption the use of the motorcycle outlines the experience that allows the consumer to revisit when he desires. It differs in this manner from other objects of consumption and may also differ in regard to the emotional experience the consumer may have during its consumption, as the experience may be more intense. The experience can also be broadened to aspects of consumption that are in connection with the brand of Harley-Davidson. This would include subcultural connections in which the consumer wishes to partake. These social influences can have the impact that the consumer seeks more acceptance and alters his behaviour accordingly.

However, the possession of a motorcycle is required for these alterations to occur and, therefore, it can be argued that the original purchase of a Harley-Davidson may not be impacted by psychosocial elements to the extent previously assumed. The motorcycle experience in itself may not differ greatly from other motorcycle brands and types which allows the argument that whilst the object of consumption changes the outcome is of a similar nature.

6.3.3.3 Developmental

Developmental aspects need to be taken into consideration as well when attempting to understand the purchase behaviour of middle-aged Harley-Davidson consumers. This can be in connection to the previously stated men-of-action-hero in which the consumer wishes to attempt to escape the feeling of being a mere earnings mechanism or based on changing economic and social environments in which the breadwinner position appears to be threatened by their female partners. It is also important to consider nostalgia and other economic developments when attempting to understand this particular consumer behaviour.

Nostalgia may be placed in connection with the brand of Harley-Davidson based on its long-standing existence the consumer was able to form preferences based on prior connections to the brand. Some consumers have stated that they have never thought of being able to purchase a Harley-Davidson which outlines that not just an economic development is in place but also memories of yesteryear which may enhance the consumption. Additionally, the motorcycles that are designed by Harley-Davidson often have a retro appearance which may motivate the consumption further as the design can be linked to personal memories of the consumers. Within the automotive sector, as argued by Schindler and Holbrook (2003), life-long preferences are formed at a young age. This may have an influence on the consumption of Harley-Davidson products at a later stage in the consumer's life. This formulates the argument that a pathway is in existence that guides the consumer towards the purchase of a Harley-Davidson at one point in his life.

The other factor that needs to be considered is the factor of economic changes that can occur which may facilitate the consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. As previously argued, emotions of memories in which the consumer was of a lower social status may increase the consumption desire for more frivolous consumption. The reflection of some consumers of their past has outlined that they used to believe that owning a Harley-Davidson would be an unachievable dream but due to economic changes linked with the surprise that Harley-Davidsons is not as expensive as they anticipated may influence the consumption.

6.3.4 How can this be modelled to explain hedonic consumption within a framework that considers the economic risks involved?

The resulting model would need to consider internal and external influences for the consumption. As outlined previously, whilst external influences are at play they do not have the impact that was previously anticipated through a peer pressure mechanism that can slow consumption.

Within chapter five, Holt's four dimensions of consumption (1995) were discussed in detail. There were implications which make it challenging to apply Holt's four dimensions of consumption to Harley-Davidson consumption as a motivator for the purchase. Consumption as experience can be seen as a development in which the consumer purchase of a Harley appears to be the next step for maturing motorcyclists to take. For this, it is important to look at the motorcycling community as a whole and not the specific consumption of one particular brand. Additionally, this can have the form of a domino effect in which the decision of one motorcyclist to commit to Harley-Davidson can have the impact that other consumers can go through a process which allows them to change their perception and it necessarily creates a new shared lens of understanding. This approach of consumption as experience can be seen as the most applicable to Harley-Davidson consumers, based on the participants' stories.

Consumption as integration consists of three aspects; assimilation, producing, and personalising. Within the assimilation process, the consumer can advance from novice to expert within the subculture. For this the separation has to be applied that divides Harley motorcyclists from other motorcycle consumers. The Harley subculture has a strong pull that allows the consumer to create a desire to keep participating in the subculture. Based on this approach the aspect of producing can be applied that requires an active participation of the consumer within the subculture. The participation can then be indicated through personalisation of the object of consumption in which the consumer can express his own personal understanding of the consumption through his knowledge and expertise. However, this can only occur post-purchase, as it requires the consumption object to be possessed in order for the integration to occur.

Consumption as classification is divided into two aspects, one is the classification through objects and the other is represented through a process of classification through actions. The classification through objects can be applied to the motivation of Harley-Davidson consumers that they may wish to appear cool or simply to be part of the subculture of Harley-Davidson. For this, it is not relevant if they are part of a motorcycle group or a single rider. The ownership of the motorcycle in itself represents the classification and indication for their affiliation to Harley-Davidson. Classification through actions, on the other hand, can indicate a more detailed classification process which requires a deeper division between “us” and “them”. For this specific motorcycle, group emblems are used that indicate the consumer affiliation. However, this can only occur once a Harley-Davidson is owned. Whilst extensions of their consumption can be applied post-purchase the key component for this aspect is the motorcycle ownership and the subsequent classification through the main affiliation of Harley-Davidson. Therefore, it can be argued that consumption as classification requires a temporarily based division, between the moment that can constitute to be part of the original purchase intention and the post-purchase environment and behaviour.

The last addition to the four dimensions of consumption comes through the approach of consumption as play. Previously it was assumed that consumption as play may be an important part to find the reasoning for the consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Within this approach, the community and interaction within this community stands at the forefront. However, in order for the consumption as play aspects to become active, the product needs to be possessed as otherwise, the introduced parts of communing and socialising will not occur. In this case, the Harley-Davidson motorcycle can be seen as an access key to a new subculture that would have otherwise been not possible to participate in. It, therefore, can only occur in a post-purchase environment as the consumer needs to own the motorcycle first. Prior to the purchase, it has been assumed that the consumer will have fantasies about the social aspects that may enhance his desire for the consumption. However, this argument cannot be supported as the potential consumers have predominately focused their attention on the motorcycle itself rather than the community that may open up for them after the purchase has been completed. Only some consumers

indicated that the club and social life of Harley-Davidson made it more attractive for them to follow up on their purchase intentions.

Whilst the four dimensions of consumption outline appropriate ways of consumer behaviour in a post-purchase environment, they lack applicability for decision-making processes prior to purchase.

6.4 Main conclusion for the study

Throughout the interviews with the Harley-Davidson consumers, something came to light that was not previously anticipated. The focus of this research is on Harley-Davidson and the old man brand that it is representing. However, a wider perception needs to be temporarily seen. The starting age for motorcycling was 18 years and the first Harley was purchased at age 47.

The more mature generation of Harley Consumers is not formed through a mid-life crisis but rather Harley offers ageing motorcyclists a way to continue their hobby. Age plays a role within this consumption but not the role that is often assumed. The consumption of Harley-Davidson motorcycles is driven through an awareness of age instead of a mid-life crisis.

It can be argued that a form of progression occurs amongst Harley consumers, which can be observed in the example of participant 4 who says that the thought of stopping to ride motorcycles depresses him and even has an extension on his progression which a variety of others shared with him, that is to purchase a Trike when he is physically unfit to ride a two-wheeled motorcycle anymore.

Rather than a mid-life crisis purchase, which is often guided through the fear of getting older or attempts to look younger, it is an awareness of their age and an adaptation in their desires; instead of going fast it is to enjoy the ride and the scenery whilst being

aware of their physical abilities which link back to the aspect of safety previously discussed.

Due to this progression, a timeline can be established, outlined in section 5.2.4.5. The majority of Harley consumers have started to motorcycle in their teenage years, in some cases before the age of 10. This indicates an early interest in the leisure activity of motorcycling. Then two options present themselves, some may temporarily stop to motorcycle due to marriage and childbirth and the shifted responsibility from oneself to the family. An example of this can be seen in participant 3 who stopped riding motorbikes and waited until his kids were old enough to look after themselves before returning to his hobby.

However, the majority of consumers chose to go down the other path of continuing to motorcycle during that period, during which they managed to accumulate 19 motorcycles of different types and brands. From this point, the interest appears to shift to a more relaxed, safe and more age-appropriate way of motorcycling. That is the point that the first Harley-Davidson is purchased, as the mean age for the first Harley-Davidson purchase was 47 and not a single participant stated that he bought his first Harley before the age of 40. Loyalty towards the brand of Harley-Davidson is expressed which can be seen in their buying, not one Harley, but 3 Harleys over time. A large number of Participants have said that they regret waiting this long and wished that they had bought a Harley sooner than they did.

A potential fourth step can be included that would illustrate a continuance of their motorcycle consumption through the purchase of a Trike or three-wheeler motorcycle. This is based on their mental and physical health if they are still able to move a two-wheeled motorcycle which appears to be the measure for them to judge their ability.

To conclude it can be said that it is a sensible and thought through decision that may appear senseless to outsiders.

6.5 Limitations to Research

Limitations to this study can be predominantly seen in the scale of the research. The focus was on Harley consumers from Edinburgh, this represents only a small group of Harley-Davidson consumers in the European market and an even smaller group on a global scale. Whilst the contact time was limited with the participants it was used effectively and relevant data was able to be gathered.

Additionally, this research only focused on one particular group of Harley-Davidson consumers. Other groups may have a different perspective and experience than the interviewed group of middle-aged male Harley-Davidson consumers. These groups are younger or older Harley-Davidson users or female Harley owners, which represent a minority among Harley-Davidson consumers. Further developments of this study are outlined Chapter 6.7.

6.6 Contribution to knowledge

Through this piece of research, a contribution to further understand consumer behaviour has been made. Whilst it adds a small fragment of understanding to the current understanding of consumer behaviour it is an important aspect to consider, as not only age elements come into play but also a detailed subcultural community. It is important that Harley-Davidson is not labelled a mid-life crisis brand and this research has countered this apparent common knowledge about Harley-Davidson. Through this research, an addition has been made to previous research on the consumer behaviour of motorcycle consumers. This first academic research focusing on European Harley consumers offers an insight into the behavioural traits of the customer base.

The theory development of a progression of consumption amongst middle aged men was based on a process of deductive reasoning. The starting point for this contribution was table 4.1 in which a gap between the start of motorcycling and the age of the now Harley-Davidson consumer's first purchase of a Harley-Davidson. The mean age to start motorcycling was 18 and the mean age to purchase the first Harley was at 47. A gap of nearly 20 years outlines that a change of the consumer perception is taking place, as otherwise the consumer would have purchased a Harley at an earlier stage. This was further strengthened by the consumer's own interpretation of their personal situation; based on a change of taste or willingness to accept certain risks that can be

related to motorcycling. The consumer additionally placed a higher focus on comfort rather than speed. The progression of consumption was also indicated through the extension of their consumption. A large variety of current Harley-Davidson consumers have outlined that they wish to purchase trike once they are too old for a two wheeled motorcycle. This relates back to physical and mental attributes that are required for a safe control of a two wheeled motorcycle. This particular aspect is currently only a plan, or an idea and future research may find this further progression interesting to explore if this change is actually going to occur.

Possible industry application for this research may be for motorcycle manufacturers in regard to design of their motorcycle products and the subsequent marketing strategy that is being used to facilitate purchases. This does not just include Harley-Davidson but can be seen to use to any manufacturer to understand their completion in more detail.

This particular framework of a progression of consumption adds to the understanding of Harley-Davidson consumers and may find other applications within consumer behavioural research or leisure activity research. This is based on the predominant use of Harley-Davidson as a leisure activity.

This research provides a unique European perspective of consumer behaviour and Harley-Davidson consumers which contribute to a better understanding of the field of consumer research.

Further investigation into the motorcycling community is necessary to strengthen the understanding that motorcycling can be far more than just the simple purchase of a two-wheeled vehicle.

6.7 Suggestions for future research consideration

This research focused on middle-aged male Harley-Davidson consumers and used non-motorcyclists as a comparative cluster with the same age and gender specifications. A variety of variables and different approaches can be selected for future research to consider including gender, age, or locational demographics. Additionally, a comparison can be attempted between Harley-Davidson consumers and other motorcycle brand consumers which may highlight a different approach to motorcycle consumption. It may also be advisable to illustrate the progression of

consumption amongst motorcyclists through a longitudinal research which will require a long-term commitment to identify various stages of consumption up to the point where motorcycle consumption is terminated. Harley-Davidson is not only an ideal case study for marketing research but also offers a great opportunity for insight into consumer behaviour as it has previously been overlooked.

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Chapter Seven – Appendix

Chapter Seven- Appendix

7.1 Appendix 1 (Ethical Approval Form)

<p>For completion by The Head of Division/Subject Area/Group, OR Division/Subject Area/Group Research Ethics Committee:</p> <p><i>Either</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I refer this application back to the applicant for the following reason(s):</p> <p>Name <i>(if you have an electronic signature please include it here)</i></p> <p>_____ (Head of Division/ Subject Area/ Group)</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Please return the form to the applicant.</p> <p><i>Or</i></p> <p>Please tick one of the alternatives below:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I refer this application to the QMU Research Ethics Panel.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> I find this application acceptable and an application for Ethical Approval should now be submitted to a relevant external committee.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I grant Ethical Approval for this research.</p> <p>Name <i>(if you have an electronic signature please include it here)</i></p> <p>_____ Bryan W. Cruden _____ (BEaMethics)</p> <p>Date ____8th June 2017_____</p> <p>Please email one copy of this form to the applicant and one copy to the Secretary to the Research Ethics Panel (ResearchEthics@gmu.ac.uk).</p> <p>Date application returned: _____8th June 2017_____</p>

7.2 Appendix 2 (Research Questions Harley-Cluster)

Interview Questions

The questions outlined below are a sample of possible questions, further question must be at the Researchers digression if further information can be achieved. It is depending on the flow of the interview and the participant's willingness to answer.

Preamble to Interview

1. Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?
2. Do you have any Questions regarding the Information Sheet?
3. During the course of this interview potentially sensitive Questions will be asked which you can refuse to answer without giving any reason or terminating the interview, do you understand?
4. Do you understand that you may not personally benefit from your participation, however your participation is appreciated?

Interview

1. How old are you?
2. Are you married?
3. If no, are you in a relationship?
4. What is your occupation?

The Researcher will inform the participant that next question may be of sensitive nature in order to ensure that the interviewee will not be surprised by its nature and potential invasiveness and will be reminded that they do not need to answer them.

5. What is your annual income?
6. When did you start riding motorbikes?
7. How many motorcycles did you own in your life?
8. Were they all of a similar type (e.g. cruiser, chopper)?
9. How many of them were Harleys?

10. Were you thinking of buying another brand instead of a Harley?
11. How long were you thinking of buying a Harley before you bought your first one?
12. How long did you own your Harley-Davidson for?
13. What kind is it?
14. How much did you originally pay for it?
15. How much did you invest into since then?
16. How long were you thinking of buying a Harley before you bought your first one?
17. How long were you saving up for it?
18. In your opinion, what is the appeal of Harley-Davidson to their consumer?
19. If you could describe your Harley experience in one word, what would it be?
20. Did the Culture surrounding Harley make it more appealing to you?

The Researcher will inform the participant that next questions may be of sensitive nature in order to ensure that the interviewee will not be surprised by its nature and potential invasiveness and being reminded that they do not need to answer them.

21. How did it impact your home life, was buying the Harley-Davidson the main priority in which everything had to follow suit or was it a side thing that you saved up for?
22. Did it create arguments?
23. Did you hold back on going on holiday so that the saved money can go into your Harley?
24. During the time leading up to buying your motorcycle, did you feel financially stressed?
25. Do you plan financially, short-term or long-term or both? (Short term: Groceries, restaurant visits; Long-Term: house, car, holidays)
26. Do you see yourself as what is known as an impulse buyer?

27. How did you feel when you first rode on a Harley? (manly, risky, scared, worried, free)
28. How do you see risk?
29. Do you think of the dangers that come along with riding a motorcycle?
30. Do you think on the possible impacts it can have on your life and your loved ones if you have an accident? (your own life, financially)
31. When thinking of your family, does that change your perception of risk?
32. Did the American side of Harley make it more appealing, was that something you wanted to reach, such as the American Dream?
33. Did you wanted to buy a head turner, or was it not important to what others thought of your bike?
34. How do you see the Outlaw image that is surrounding Harley?
35. How do you feel after the ride? (guilty, happy, satisfied, relieved)
36. Would you describe yourself as optimistic or pessimistic?
37. Do you smoke? (Smokers indicate a characteristic to be more risk seeking than non-smokers)
38. How many accidents did you have? (Small falls, severe accidents)
39. Did that make you re-consider motorcycling?
40. Remembering the time you have bought your Harley-Davidson was there a special/extraordinary moment? (such as Childbirth, Promotion at work, Wedding)
41. What other hobbies do you have?
42. Do you partake in other risky leisure activities, even if it is not on a regular basis?
43. How old were you when you bought your first Harley?
44. How many did you own since then?
45. When will you stop riding motorcycles?

46. Is your partner riding with you? (Together on one motorcycle or on a separate one)
47. Was she/he into motorcycles before you?
48. When you think about it now, did you buy a Harley for what it is or what it can be
such as the tours and long rides you can have with it and create an experience out
of it?
49. Would you do it all again?

7.3 Appendix 3 (Research Questions Non-Motorcycle Cluster)

Interview Questions

The questions outlined below are a sample of possible questions, further question must be at the Researchers digression if further information can be achieved. It is depending on the flow of the interview and the participant's willingness to answer.

Preamble to Interview

5. Have you read and understood the Information Sheet?
6. Do you have any Questions regarding the Information Sheet?
7. During the course of this interview potentially sensitive Questions will be asked which you can refuse to answer without giving any reason or terminating the interview, do you understand?
8. Do you understand that you may not personally benefit from your participation, however your participation is appreciated?

Interview

50. How old are you?
51. Are you married?
52. If no, are you in a relationship?
53. What is your occupation?

The Researcher will inform the participant that next question may be of sensitive nature in order to ensure that the interviewee will not be surprised by its nature and potential invasiveness and will be reminded that they do not need to answer them.

54. What is your annual income?
55. Do you have a motorcycling license?
56. What do you think of motorcycling?
57. Did you ever think of obtaining a license, and if so why didn't you?
58. Do you have an appreciation for motorcycling?

59. Did you ever wanted to buy a motorcycle?
60. In your opinion, what is the appeal of Harley-Davidson to their consumer?
61. How do you see the Outlaw image that is surrounding Harley?
62. Do you plan financially, short-term or long-term or both? (Short term: Groceries, restaurant visits; Long-Term: house, car, holidays)
63. Do you see yourself as what is known as an impulse buyer?
64. What is putting you off motorcycling?
65. How do you see risk?
66. Do you think of the dangers that come along with riding a motorcycle, when you see a motorcyclist?
67. When thinking of your family, does that change your perception of risk?
68. Would you describe yourself as optimistic or pessimistic?
69. Do you smoke? (Smokers indicate a characteristic to be more risk seeking than non-smokers)
70. What hobbies do you have?
71. Do you partake in other risky leisure activities, even if it is not on a regular basis?
72. At any point when you were going through a special time/ extraordinary time, did that trigger a purchase out of the ordinary?
73. If you would buy a motorcycle which one would it be?
74. What extraordinary expenditures do you have? Where do you spend your money on just for your own enjoyment?
75. What did you always wanted to buy, but thought might be too expensive or frivolous?

7.4 Appendix 4 (Participant Information Sheet)



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Information Sheet for Potential Participants

My name is Tario Ahlers and I am a Postgraduate student from the School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh. As part of my degree course, I am undertaking a research project for my PhD dissertation.

The title of my project is: The impact of emotions on consumer decision-making: a behavioural finance analysis of hedonic consumption as related to the Harley Davidson brand

This study will investigate emotional influences that can have an effect on Consumer behaviour and acquisitions of non-necessary products, these may include psychological, social, and cultural aspects. Due to the nature of the research some questions you may find too invasive or private, you can refuse to answer these questions or terminate the interview at any time without giving a reason or judgment. The Questions will be based around your Harley experience, personal situation and financial situation.

I am looking for volunteers to participate in the project. The criteria for inclusion are being male aged between 40 to 60 years and don not owning a Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

What will you have to do if you agree to take part?

1. We will arrange a time to meet, which is convenient for you and in your own home if that is appropriate.
2. There will be one, single interview with myself during which I will ask you questions but primarily there to listen about your experiences with Harley-Davidson. The interview is expected to last no longer than 60 minutes and is a one-off event.
3. When I have completed the study I will produce a summary of the findings which I will be more than happy to send you if you are interested.

Will your participation in the project remain confidential?

If you agree to take part, your name will not be recorded of the interview and the information will not be disclosed to other parties. Your responses to the questions will be used for the purpose of this project only. You can be assured that if you take part in the project you will remain anonymous.

What are the advantages of taking part?

You may find the project interesting and enjoy answering questions about the things you do in your free time. Once the study is finished it could provide a useful insight into consumer behaviour. Through your participation it is possible that you get a more in-depth understanding of your own consumption and influencing elements. However you may not directly benefit from participation

Are there any disadvantages of taking part?

It could be that you are not comfortable talking about certain aspects that will be asked in the interview. The research focuses on emotional influences within decision-making processes this will, at times, result in personal questions which you feel are invasive to your privacy. These questions will be aimed at personal findings and relationships of influences that may have impacted your decision. You have the right to not answer any question you do not want to respond to, without giving an explanation.

Do you have to take part in the study?

No, your participation in this project is entirely voluntary. You are not obliged to take part, you have been approached as a member of Harley-Davidson community and may be interested in sharing your experiences, this does not mean you have to participate.

Sponsorship and Payment

This research is conducted independently and not directed by the Harley-Davidson motorcycle company.

You may receive £10 in Cash or in the form of a Voucher for the time you have spent answering the questions of the researcher. This is depending on the numbers of participate.

For your Information

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to sign the consent form (attached) and return it to the researcher. The researcher is aware that some questions may be of a sensitive nature. The whole procedure should take no longer than 60 minutes. You do not have to answer any questions that you don't wish to and you are free to withdraw from the study at any stage. You do not have to give any reasons for not wishing to answer any particular questions or to withdraw from the study. Furthermore, it is unlikely that there will be any apparent benefit to you, either now or in the future as a result of taking part in this study.

All data written up in the dissertation/project will be anonymised. Your name will be replaced with a participant number, and it will not be possible for you to be identified in any reporting of the data gathered.

If you would like to contact an independent person, who knows about this project but is not involved in it, you are welcome to contact Mr Richard Bent. His contact details are given below.

If you have read and understood this information sheet, any questions you may or had have been answered, and you would like to be a participant in the study, please now see the consent form.

Contact details of the researcher

Name of researcher: Tario Ahlers

Address: Postgraduate Student Student
School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
University Drive,
MUSSELBURGH
EH21 6UU

Email / Telephone: tahlers@qmu.ac.uk / 0131 474 0000

Contact details of the independent adviser

Name of adviser: Mr Richard Bent

Address: Senior Lecturer
School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
University Drive,
MUSSELBURGH
EH21 6UU

Email / Telephone: rbent@qmu.ac.uk 0131 474 0000

7.5 Appendix 5 (Consent Form)



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Consent Form

"The impact of emotions on consumer decision-making: a behavioural finance analysis of hedonic consumption as related to the Harley Davidson brand"

I have read and understood the information sheet and this consent form. I have had an opportunity to ask questions about my participation.

I understand that I am under no obligation to take part in this study.

I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this study at any stage without giving any reason.

I agree to participate in this study.

Name of participant: _____

Signature of participant: _____

Signature of researcher: _____

Date: _____

Contact details of the researcher

Name of researcher: Tario Ahlers

Address: Postgraduate Student, Business, Enterprise and
Management,
School of Arts, Social Sciences and Management
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh
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